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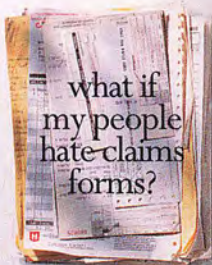
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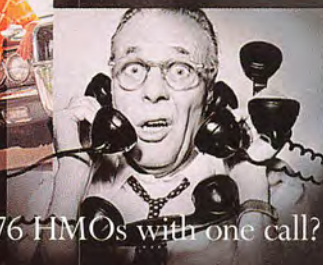


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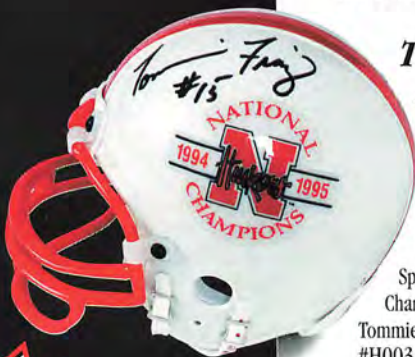
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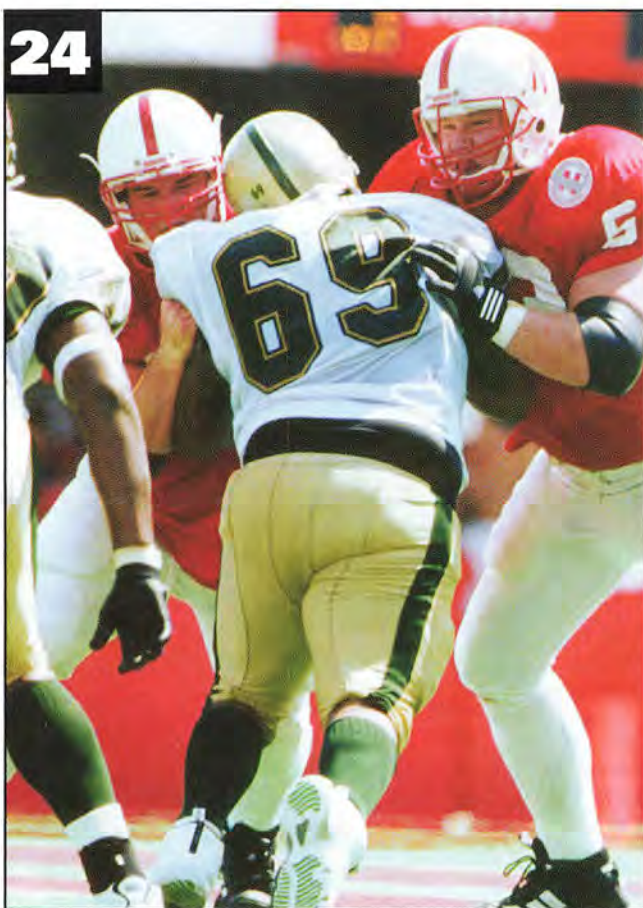
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Huskers Illustrated CONTENTS

OCTOBER 10, 1998 • Volume 18, No. 12



24 Line Of The Times

To play on the offensive line at Nebraska, one must have the ability to not only measure up to the competition, but to the tradition established by former Cornhusker greats.

By Mike Babcock

30 Hawaiian Delight

Nebraska's first scholarship player from Hawaii, Dominic Raiola didn't throw in the towel while waiting for his chance to show they do more than surf in America's paradise.

NEXT ISSUE

The review of the Texas A&M game and preview of Kansas will mail Oct. 12.

4 OCTOBER 10, 1998

DEPARTMENTS

Letters	6
NU Notebook	9
<i>There's nothing scientific about the offensive linemen's new weight checking system, but it is delicious.</i>	
State Of The Huskers	10
<i>DeAngelo Evans endured everything with outward good cheer, displaying maturity well beyond his 21 years.</i>	
Off The Set	12
<i>The "high-tech toys" at Memorial Stadium have only added to the unbelievable atmosphere of game day.</i>	
From The Beat	13
<i>Preseason assessments of Texas A&M and Kansas State appear to be solid. Will the same be true of Nebraska, which will get both team's best shots?</i>	
Oklahoma State Game Recap	14
4th And Inches	17
Oklahoma Stats/1998 Stats	18
Scouting Texas A&M	20
Where Are They Now?	28
<i>David Humm was so impressive as a freshman that Bob Devaney looked at him as a potential starter in 1971, despite the return of Jerry Tagge and Van Brownson.</i>	
10 Questions	29
<i>With Brian Shaw</i>	
Grid Recruiting	32
<i>Always a strength at Nebraska, the offensive line should only get stronger with the signing of several top recruits.</i>	
Prep Report	33
<i>The recruiting wars as seen through the eyes of Brownwood quarterback Colby Freeman.</i>	
Campus Life	37
<i>A look inside the day-to-day lifestyles of student athletes. This week's subject: Matt Davison</i>	
Last Word	38



Husker Support Groups

One of the most true characteristics of our beloved Huskers has to be their devout fan commitment across the nation and world. I have lived outside of Nebraska since 1990. In that time, I have been fortunate enough to enjoy well-coordinated, active and fun memberships to Californians for Nebraska and, now, Georgians for Nebraska (GFN). These clubs are generally comprised of transplanted NU fans and their families. And on any televised Saturday game day, the respective members meet at a favorite venue to cheer for the Big Red. For the Washington game, I attended GFN's local haunts in Marietta, Ga. I counted at least 250 people in the private screening room, which was one big screen flanked by several televisions, and more red shirts spilled out into the restaurant's table and booths. It was a great scene. Despite the media-coined slow start, these Husker fans (and the thousands in clubs in other states) hold no reservation when cheering for the mighty Big Red.

Tim J. Butler
Kennesaw, Ga.

Who's Calling The Plays?

Aside from the fact that there has been an increase in the number of passing plays, there is also the problem of when those plays are called. For example, if it's first-and-10 and the quarterback hands off and the play gains one yard, the Huskers are left with second and nine. On the next play the quarterback misses on a 35-yard pass to Sheldon Jackson. Why? We only needed nine yards for the first down. Now there is a problem because it's third and nine. If Solich hadn't called that low percentage passing play on second down we would have looked better on third down. If Solich would have called another running play on second down, which is what they do best, he would not have wasted second down. The chances of picking up a third and short are much greater. This did not occur on just one series. Solich called the same play on three, maybe four series, hence all the punting situations. After the second time, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the ball is going to Sheldon Jackson.

The first drive was vintage Nebraska. They moved the ball 63 yards without passing.

What is his excuse? The offensive line hadn't jelled yet, and DeAngelo Evans hadn't returned yet. Cal's defense wasn't that good. What's going to happen when they go to College Station and play Texas A&M and their Wrecking Crew defense? Is Solich going to adjust and turn Nebraska's offense into Florida's offense and use four and five wide-outs?

T.V.V.
New York, NY



Job Well Done

Congratulations to the team and all the coaching staff for a fine and convincing win against the University of California. Also, we appreciate the University of Nebraska athletic department for making a television with Fox Sports that enables us from coast to coast to see the Nebraska games.

Ilgmars Bergmanis
Des Plaines, Iowa

Learn Some Football

I have seen letters and heard callers on radio shows criticize the Huskers', or more specifically, Frank Solich's play calling. They say he is throwing too much and not running enough. Well I'm sure all these armchair quarterbacks, in their infinite knowledge of football, have taken into consideration the fact that the pass is used to set up the run. If the other team knows that all Nebraska will do is run up the middle, then they will stop it, regardless of how good the line and backs are. If the Huskers complete a few passes down the field, as they have been, then the other team has to back off the line and defend the pass. This leaves more room up front for running plays and play-action. This is not brain surgery; it is Offensive Football 101. Oh, by the way—the Huskers are 4-0.

Paul Garrett
Omaha, Neb.

Got Something To Say?

Please send your comments and questions to: Letters, P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Neb. 68501. Or fax them to us at (772) 851-1720. We reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, content and length. For those with electronic mail abilities, huskersedit@sportscom.com.

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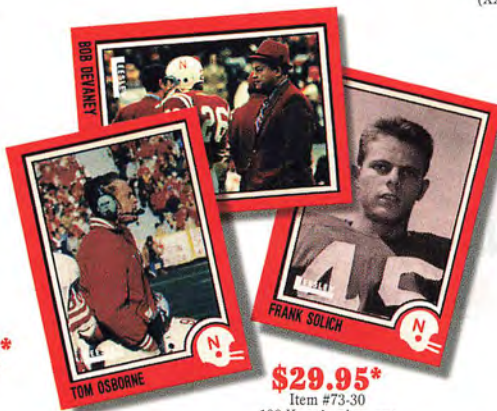


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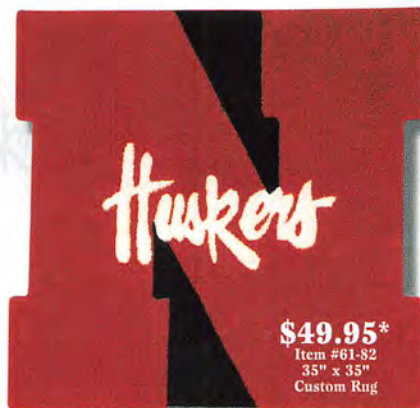
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GOO CHECK SYSTEM

There's nothing scientific about the offensive linemen's new weight checking system, but it is delicious

It's a sign of the times. Four interior offensive linemen on Nebraska's three-deeps are listed at 300 pounds or heavier. Tackle **Adam Julch** is the biggest, at 6-foot-5 and 315 pounds.

The other three, all listed at 300 pounds, are tackle **Jason Schwab** and guards **Dominic Raiola** and **Brandt Wade**. Raiola, a redshirt freshman, also alternates with **Josh Heskew** at center. In addition, tackle **Jeff Clausen**, who has been sidelined this season by a knee injury, weighs in at 305 pounds.

The Cornhuskers' 300-pound offensive linemen carry their weight well.

There isn't much body fat among the linemen, thanks to efforts of the Nebraska Athletic Performance Team, directed by **Boyd Epley** — and, perhaps, the line's own "goo-check" system.

That's right, the "goo check" system.

You won't find "goo check" listed in the Nebraska media guide

under the heading "Support Systems." It's a new, unscientific system developed by former Cornhusker lineman **Matt Hoskinson**.

At least senior co-captain Heskew credits — or blames, depending on your point of view — Hoskinson with initiating the "goo check" procedure last season. Hoskinson was a 6-1, 280-pound center and guard, Nebraska's indispensable sixth man, and was always an emotional leader.

The "goo checks" typically are made in the dining hall at the Hewitt Center.

An offensive lineman might emerge from the "performance buffet" line with a half-dozen cookies or a hot fudge sundae on his tray, prompting a concerned linemate to institute a "goo check."

"Do you really think you need that?" he will ask as he pinches the lineman's side to check the "goo." If the "goo" is regarded as excessive, Heskew explained recently, the checker might

be compelled to confiscate the hot fudge sundae or the half-dozen cookies — for the good of the linemate.

"You've got to stand your ground or you're going to get pushed around," Heskew said.

And, more to the point, lose the dessert off your

The other offensive linemen in the regular rotation, **James Sherman**, **Ben Gessford**, **Russ Hochstein** and **Dave Volk**, who has seen limited action at tackle, are in the 280-to-295 range.

Last year's starting offensive interior was slightly heavier, with tackles **Eric**

An offensive lineman might emerge from the "performance buffet" line with a half-dozen cookies or a hot fudge sundae on his tray, prompting a concerned linemate to institute a "goo check."

"performance buffet" tray.

Only the interior offensive linemen and the tight ends are subject to the "goo checks."

That's due to the fact that "we're supposed to have the 'goo,'" said the 6-3 Heskew, who is listed at 290 pounds. "Not too many (other) people care, and they're not going to listen."

The "goo checks" are more than just messing around, according to Heskew.

They help the line "build chemistry, I think," he said.

Anderson and **Fred Pollack** and guard **Aaron Taylor** all listed at 305 pounds apiece and guard **Jon Zatechka** at 290.

Nebraska's offensive linemen are modest-sized compared to Kansas State's. Three of the Wildcats' interior starters are over 300 pounds, with tackle **Ryan Young** the biggest at 6-6 and 330 pounds. Guards **Brien Hanley** and **Jeremy Martin** are 6-2, 325 and 6-4, 305, respectively.

It's a sign, and the size, of the times. ■

Someone Check That Kid's Birth Certificate

DeAngelo Evans endured everything with outward good cheer, displaying maturity well beyond his 21 years



**Mike
BABCOCK**

AN INTROSPECTIVE DeAngelo Evans met with reporters on the Tuesday prior to the Washington game. As has been the case since the day he arrived from Wichita, Kan., Nebraska's sophomore I-back had something of substance to say.

This time, Evans quoted former football coach Lou Holtz.

"He said life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it,"

said Evans.

"I think that sums up, basically, how I've been thinking; reacting to things that really don't happen the way you want them to because this didn't happen the way I wanted it to."

Specifically, Evans was referring to the fact that he had missed the first three games this season because of the knee injury he suffered in the first major preseason scrimmage.

"I would much rather have had three games under my belt going into this game," he said, "but that's not the way it's going to be, so I've just got to go out and do what I've got to do."

In a larger sense, Evans also would much rather have had last season under his belt going into this season. But that wasn't to be, either, because of a mysterious pelvic-related injury that sidelined him after the Big 12 championship game against Texas in December of 1996 until last spring.

He carried 32 times for 130 yards and three touchdowns against the Longhorns.

To put his layoff in perspective, Cornhusker quarterback Bobby Newcombe was still a high school student in Albuquerque, N.M., the last time Evans took a pitchout in a real game.

"I dreamed of pitching the ball to him some day," Newcombe said before the Washington game. "It will mean a lot to me to see him take one snap after going through so much pain and enduring everything he did."

He has never lamented the injuries that have curtailed what well could be a career comparable to the best in Cornhusker history. In 11 games, only one of which he started, as a true freshman he rushed for 776 yards and 14 touchdowns and caught 12 passes for another 75 yards.

The Nebraska freshmen to rush for more yards were Ahman Green (1,086) and Calvin Jones (900), who also scored 14 touchdowns to set a freshman record that Evans tied.

To refresh your memory, Green and Jones currently rank second and third on the Cornhuskers' career rushing list, behind Mike Rozier, the 1983 Heisman Trophy winner.

That's the company in which Evans might well have been running last season had it not been for the pelvic injury. Chances are, he would have alternated with Green to give Nebraska a running tandem like no other, better even than Jones and Derek Brown, the "We-backs" of 1992.

Despite the injury, Evans has never complained, at least not for print.

Probably the closest he came was in mid-September, after he resumed practice following arthroscopic surgery, when he told the *Lincoln Journal Star*, "I'm sick of all the attention

that goes with it. I'm tired of my teammates welcoming me back. It feels good, but now I just want to play."

Evans has turned a frustrating experience into something positive. He has taken it as a lesson in how to live. After being on the periphery for about a year and a half, trying to rehabilitate and watching others do what he would like to do, "I think you understand how quick things can be over," he said.

"When I was coming out of high school, I was all-everything, just like a lot of people who come here. I never expected things to happen the way they have happened. I think it helps you. Being a young man, you realize that anything can happen at any point in time. You just have to be prepared for it, but you can never really fully prepare."

Considering the length of time that passed before Evans could return to practice, it would have been understandable had he decided to turn his attention elsewhere. He's well spoken and intelligent, by all indications someone certain of achieving success off a football field as well as on.

The long absence hasn't broken Evans, whose optimism was justified by his 146 yards and three touchdowns rushing in the Cornhuskers' 55-7 victory against Washington.

He had no doubts going into the game. "I'm not worried. I'm not questioning myself," he said beforehand. "I don't go out and question myself when I'm on the football field."

"If I couldn't play, I wouldn't be here, and the coaches wouldn't have the confidence in me that they do. So I'm not going to be out there questioning myself, second-guessing myself. I may second-guess myself in other areas of my life, but football is not one that I second-guess myself in, ever."

Clearly, he's got those percentages Holtz was talking about in the right proportion. ■



Putting his injuries in perspective, Evans never thought about giving up football.

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A Sight For Red Eyes

The "high-tech toys" at Memorial Stadium have only added to the unbelievable atmosphere of game day



Bill DOLEMAN

THE FIRST TIME I saw big-screen replay monitors in a football stadium was at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz. Nebraska played Florida State in a forgettable Fiesta Bowl game, losing 41-17 on Jan. 1, 1990. Fortunately, the details of the game have escaped my memory, but one thing I do remember is that I wasn't all that impressed with the new high-tech "toy" that hung in the end zone.

The picture was soft, somewhat out of focus and downright hard to see clearly. The production looked primitive, and everyday television commercials were shown with no way to change the station. It looked cheap.

That in mind, when it was announced that Nebraska was planning to install big screens in Memorial Stadium in time for the 1994 season, my first reaction was, 'Bad idea.' If what I had seen at Sun Devil Stadium was the norm and the wave of the future, then it would be nothing more than a waste of money. Granted, my opinion doesn't mean a whole lot. I just had one then, and I have a different one now.

Let me tell you something; it was a great idea. I'm not afraid to admit that I was flat wrong. Now, am I biased? Of course I am. Professionally, my opinion is hardly objective because the advent of HuskerVision and its television network has afforded me a number of incredible opportunities that would not have been available otherwise. But personally, as a football fan, I can't think of a better addition to the game day experience in Lincoln than those screens mounted in the northwest and southeast corners of Memorial Stadium. Nothing has given the Nebraska Athletic Department more visibility at the cutting edge of collegiate athletics. Well, that and three national championships.

A few years ago, *Sports Illustrated* came out with a list of the best and worst in college football and called Memorial Stadium "the worst place to watch good football," the reason being that more than half of the seats are in the end zones. With the big screens, every seat is closer to the action, the sidelines and, more importantly, the tunnel. That 25-yard walkway from the Husker locker room to boulevard of bricks that leads to Tom Osborne Field is now "The Tunnel Walk." In just four short years, it has become the most dramatic new tradition and entrance in college football. What

used to be seen by just a couple of hundred fans underneath the south stands is now an event all its own, shared by 76,000.

As late as the early 1990s, it wasn't uncommon for fans to arrive late for a 1:30 p.m. kickoff. Now it's rare to see empty seats among the sea of red, even up to a half-hour before game time. There is an unmistakable sense of collective anticipation for the white flashes and the synthesized sounds of Alan Parsons' "Sirius," which tells folks that it's showtime. Since its creation, the modern-day "Tunnel Walk" has evolved from swirling stars into a 52-second animation that takes months to plan and produce.

But no matter how elaborate the production and how intricate the planning might be, sometimes things don't go as planned.

To get the full effect of "The Tunnel Walk," timing is everything. In the case of the '98 debut, everything went wrong. Here's what happened. Ordinarily, the officials go to the Nebraska locker room and ask for the captains to come to the field with them for the coin toss. A few minutes later, the team is cued as the animation concludes. The problem arose when the officials called for the captains. They called for everybody. Not wanting to get a delay of game penalty before his first game as head coach had even started, Solich did as asked. That combined with trying to coordinate it all for Fox Sports created quite a stir before and after a game that Nebraska won, 56-27, which, by the way, was HuskerVision's 26th consecutive

victory without a loss. A week later, all was right in "The Tunnel Walk" world as fans saw the coach and his team march into battle with Alabama-Birmingham.

And not only did "The Tunnel Walk" work, Nebraska won, keeping the streak intact. Take it for what it's worth, but it's kind of fun for us to talk about from time to time. Or should I say, from win to win?

It seems to me the big-screen thing was a good idea, after all.

(P.S. For those of you who are superstitious, please don't blame me for jinxing HuskerVision's "winning streak" should it come to an end any time soon.) ■



The addition of two replay screens has turned Memorial Stadium into one of college football's best game day sites.

Bill Doleman's face is familiar to Cornhusker fans. He is host for several Nebraska-related television programs including the "Husker Show" and coaches' shows for Terry Pettit, Paul Sanderford and Frank Solich.

Which Poison Do You Prefer?

Preseason assessments of Texas A&M and Kansas State appear to be solid. Will the same be true of Nebraska, which will get both team's best shots?



Curt McKEEVER

A COMMON notion before the season began was that Texas A&M and Kansas State would provide Nebraska with its two toughest tests in the Big 12 Conference.

With the Cornhuskers preparing for the first of their "Big Two" road games — at A&M — I thought it would be interesting to compare the Aggies and Wildcats.

There are obvious differences.

A&M runs a 3-4 defense, Kansas State a

4-3.

The Aggies began a challenging non-conference schedule by playing second-ranked Florida State in the Kickoff Classic. The Wildcats bullied Division I-AA Indiana State, then took some shots and even got leapfrogged in the polls because of their weak-sister schedule.

A&M has an unspectacular but savvy fifth-year senior quarterback in Brannndon Stewart, who probably is at his best when he's unnoticed (which he may be if he is still sitting on the bench). K-State has a dynamic athlete behind center in Michael Bishop who the Wildcats count on to free-lance a busted play into a 70-yard scramble.

Which poison do you prefer? In either case, both can be deadly.

Kansas State might have more ways of turning out the lights, but A&M seems to have an intangible quality, especially with its defense, that just might pull the other Aggies along for a magical ride.

A&M scored no more than 28 points in its first three games. Yet, coach R.C. Slocum's club stayed with Florida State into the fourth quarter, held a Louisiana Tech team that shredded the NU defense to seven points, and handed a ranked Southern Mississippi team its most lopsided home loss in seven seasons.

Slocum, in his 26th year overall at A&M, might have been bluffing when he said it's too early to compare this year's Aggie defense with some of the best "Wrecking Crews" of the past.

"I can recall having several first-round draft choices on the defense," he said. "Right now, I don't see any of those out there."

I doubt he'd trade Dat Nguyen for many other linebackers around the country, though.

Nguyen's enthusiasm for the game is contagious. Even after their tough non-conference schedule, the Aggies ranked in the top 25 percent in all defensive categories.

"Sometimes you have excellent units when you have a bunch of guys who just are willing to go practice and play together," Slocum said. "I'm pleased that this group is getting better."

That might cause a chuckle among Nebraska fans who remember last year's 54-15 blowout in the Big 12 championship. But if Stewart or Randy McCown doesn't trip while handing the ball off to Dante Hall or Sirr Parker — and the Aggies keep causing turnovers (they had the nation's second-best turnover ratio after three games) — the rematch with NU will be much more of a contest.

Ditto for Nebraska's Nov. 14 game in Manhattan, Kan. The Wildcats, cream-puff schedule and all, are the real deal. They might lose at Colorado this week, but don't be fooled.

Kansas State has three great linebackers in Jeff Kelly,

Travis Ochs and Mark Simoneau. After three games, they had the Cats ranked first nationally in scoring defense and second in yards allowed.

K-State also ranked No. 1 in net punting, No. 2 in punt returns (thanks to David Allen taking one back in each of the first three contests) and No. 5 in kick-off returns. Place-kicker Martin Gramatica, the winner of the 1997 Lou Groza Award, also had kicked a 65-yard field goal.

Offensively, Bill Snyder's team was No. 1 in scoring and No. 20 in total yards.

Bishop will be the key against Nebraska. Kansas State has never been able to run against the Cornhuskers. If tailback Frank Murphy lives up to the hype, that could change. But Bishop is the one to fear. Through three games, Bishop had five rushing touchdowns along with five he'd thrown.

"Last year, I didn't know anything about the offense. I was just playing game by game," Bishop said after leading his team

past Texas, 48-7. "This year, I feel I'm a total player. Whatever the situation, I can handle it well."

Even Snyder, a tough critic, seemed content.

"Michael hasn't been in a position early this season to be the dominant force in a game, but he has played very well," he said. "He has made good decisions and is much improved from a year ago."

I've got a hunch Nebraska will find A&M and Kansas State the same way — much improved from a year ago. ■



Dat Nguyen leads an Aggie "Wrecking Crew" defense that some have said is the best to take the field in over 26 years.

Glen Johnson

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

One play. One foot. Nebraska's young season came down to that, Nebraska rush end Mike Rucker said. Oklahoma State needed to make the play and gain the foot. Cowboy quarterback Tony Lindsay had spiked the ball to stop the clock on first-and-goal from inside the Nebraska 1-yard line.

Only five seconds remained.

One play. One foot.

Nebraska's defense huddled in the shadow of its own goal posts at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City.

"Basically, what we were telling each other was, this is the whole season. It boils down to five seconds," Rucker said.

"Ever since the Orange Bowl last year, we've been working out, during the winter, the summer."

With the play clock winding down inside of four seconds, Oklahoma State's Reynell Lavigne ran onto the field. "I saw No. 60 [Lavigne] come on late," said Rucker. "He should have been where the tight end was."

Lindsay took the snap, none too soon, and handed the ball to tailback Nathan Simmons, who had carried 25 times previously.

Rucker "power-rushed" the tight end. "Now that I think about it, it was kind of a blur," he said.

"I just remember getting into the tight end and backing him up. I saw the running back coming up the middle, and I just came off the tight end and grabbed his leg and wrapped him up."

"Fortunately, he didn't get in."

Oh yes, the score was 24-17 Nebraska when Rucker power-rushed the tight end and stopped Simmons, with an assist from cornerback Erwin Swiney.

And that's how it ended.

"It was dramatic, but not real fun," Nebraska center Heske said. "I'd much rather have a 40-point win."

From the beginning, it was apparent the No. 2-ranked Cornhuskers weren't apt to hang a 40-point win on Oklahoma State.

They needed a 48-yard field goal from Kris Brown with 1:06 left in the second quarter for a 3-3 tie at halftime.

They had a net of only four yards rushing at the intermission and could well have been trailing.

"All along, our feeling was that Oklahoma State can line up and they can run the football at you," said Cornhusker coach Frank Solich. "They can control the clock on you, which is evident if you go back and look at the statistics."

The Cowboys finished with an advantage of more than 10 minutes in time of possession.

"They have that type of an offense, those kind of people up front, those kind of running backs, who can control the ball and make it very difficult," Solich said. "You don't get many chances, and when you don't get many chances, you have to make the most of them."

As it turned out, Nebraska did, coming out and scoring on its first two possessions of the second half.

Both touchdown drives included key pass plays to tight end Sheldon Jackson, a 40-yarder from Bobby Newcombe on the first and a 30-yarder from Eric Crouch on the second.

Newcombe capped the first with a 6-yard run. I-back DeAngelo Evans finished off the second from

Nebraska celebrates after stopping Oklahoma State's Nathan Simmons at the one-yard line on the final play of the game.

Cornhuskers Overcome Go Down To The Wire Oklahoma State, 24-17 By Mike Babcock



Fight

Offensive Problems,
Before Turning Away

7

To The Finish



one yard out.

Midway through the third quarter, it appeared Nebraska might finally pull away. But Oklahoma State responded with two touchdowns in just over five minutes, and with 12:08 left in the game, the score was tied at 17.

The first Cowboy touchdown was set up by a 41-yard pass from Lindsay to tight end Garrett Steggs.

The pass followed a roughing the passer penalty that nullified what would have been the third interception this season by Nebraska defensive tackle Jason Wiltz.

The second Cowboy touchdown came when Cornhusker rover Joe Walker gambled on an interception attempt of a Lindsay pass to Ethan Howell.

"Joe about did me in with a couple of plays on defense and the punt return," Solich said with a laugh.

Walker lost his footing on the pass, leaving Howell open inside the Nebraska 35-yard line. The play covered 67 yards for the touchdown.

Walker was quick to redeem himself, taking an Oklahoma State punt at his own 27-yard line less than five minutes later and returning it for a touchdown.

"I saw a crease and ran as fast as I could," he explained. "It made me feel great. I feel I'm a big player, and that's what big players do, make big plays."

Solich claimed not to have been all that surprised.

"It wasn't out of the question that he could return one today," Solich said.

What did seem out of the question was that Nebraska would be limited to a net of 73 yards rushing on 36 carries, its lowest total since a 1992 Orange Bowl loss to Miami.

The Cornhuskers managed only 12 first downs and 215 total yards, in addition to their uncharacteristic deficit in time of possession.

"They ran a defense that we haven't practiced against or seen even," said Heskew. "They wanted to stop the run. And I guess they were successful at it."

Evans was Nebraska's leading rusher, with 41 yards on 15 carries.

"Offensively, we didn't get things done," said Evans, whose status for the game was questionable because of



Oklahoma State defensive back Ricky Thompson brings down Sheldon Jackson after the Nebraska tight end hauled in a 40-yard completion from Bobby Newcombe.



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a sore foot.

To make matters worse, Evans bruised his tailbone on the first play of the game.

Newcombe, who was replaced briefly by Crouch early in the second quarter after having the wind knocked out of him, was pressured constantly by the Cowboy defense.

"They were trying to get me every chance they had," Newcombe said.

Crouch also went in with 10:04 remaining in the third quarter, though not because of an injury to Newcombe.

"There were times we just wanted to sit Bobby down and visit with him," Solich said.

Crouch responded by directing the Cornhuskers' second touchdown drive, before being led to the locker-room to tend to a hip-pointer that kept him on the sideline for the remainder of the game.

The defense had to shoulder the load at the end, however, and stop Simmons, who rushed for 114 yards.

He failed to gain yardage on only four of his 26 carries. Twice he was stopped for no gain. And twice he was dropped for a 1-yard loss.

The final play went for no gain. And Rucker, who was credited with 10 tackles, guessed that Simmons might get the ball.

"I thought they had been going in between the tackles the whole time," he said. "I figured (needing) a foot, they were going to try to power it up the middle. That's what they did.

"They ran that play all day. Fortunately we were there to stop it."

Swiney and middle linebacker Jay Foreman combined for 26 tackles, and strongside linebacker Tony Ortiz, who missed the Washington game because of a concussion, returned to make 11 tackles.

"It's all right here," rush end Chad Kelsay said, pointing at his chest. "You've got to be pumping blood because if you're pumping Kool-Aid, you're not going to get the job done.

"We came up with a big play at a big time."

Oklahoma State made a big play on fourth-and-5 at the Nebraska 12-yard line to set the stage for Rucker.

Lindsay passed to Sean Love for 11 yards and first-and-goal inside the Cornhusker 1-yard line.

"When the ball's on the 1-inch line, you've got to get it in, and we failed to do that," said Oklahoma State coach Bob Simmons.

One play. One foot. ■

4TH & 1 INCHES

More News From The Oklahoma State Game

- The Cornhuskers improved their all-time record in night games to 36-12-3.
- The victory was Nebraska's 23rd in a row in a conference opener and its 45th in a row in October, dating to Oct. 25, 1986, when the Cornhuskers lost to Colorado, 20-10, at Boulder.
- Mistaken comparison. During the week prior to the game, Oklahoma State linebacker **Kenyatta Wright** told the *Tulsa World*: "We practice against **Tony Lindsay** and (backup) **B.J. Tiger**, and those boys right there are option quarterbacks. They were just as good or better than **Bobby Newcombe**."
- The weather wouldn't be a consideration, coach **Frank Solich** said before the game.

"I think you have to have a ballclub that understands that no matter what the weather is like, it has to be ready to play. We've never had teams that have been concerned about the field condition.

"We've never had teams that have been concerned how cold or how hot it is. When you become too concerned with that stuff, you lose your focus, and that's when things go bad for you."

In preparation for the possibility of rain, Solich had his quarterbacks pass wet footballs during practice on Thursday.

• Cornhusker center **Josh Heskew** was eager to play against Oklahoma State. Heskew, who is from Mustang, Okla., was not high on the Cowboys' recruiting list out of high school.

"I enjoy playing any Oklahoma team," said Heskew, whose home is a 20-minute drive from the Oklahoma campus. "It's fun for me. I get some personal satisfaction in knowing that I get to play against the guys who really didn't want me coming out of high school."

• **Joe Walker's** 92 punt return yards against Oklahoma State were 27 more than he had in his first four games combined. Walker finished the game with 160 combined return yards.

• The Nebraska-Oklahoma State game was the first involving NCAA Division I-A teams to be played at 79,000-seat Arrowhead Stadium, home of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs. The game was sponsored by Canadian-based Western Star Trucks.

• Nebraska's ticket allotment for the game was 35,000. But an estimated 50,000 Cornhusker fans were on hand. Tickets for the game were quickly sold out and were at a premium.

"We'd probably have a good following if the game would have been played at Stillwater," Solich said on Tuesday before the game.

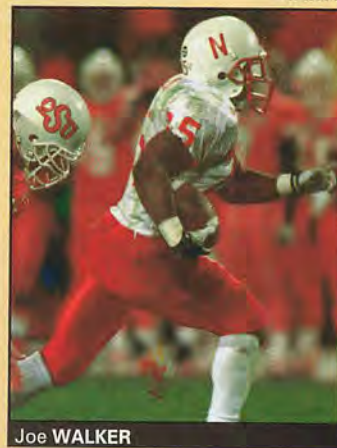
Playing the Oklahoma State "home game" in Kansas City was a benefit to Nebraska, according to Solich. "If you're the coach of the supposed home team and you're not playing at home, you probably don't look at it quite as well as if you do if you're sitting at my end of it," he said.

• The game was Nebraska's first in the regular season at a neutral site since 1992, when the Cornhuskers defeated Kansas State, 38-24, in Tokyo.

• The game was Nebraska's ninth in Kansas City, but first at Arrowhead Stadium. The Cornhuskers improved their record in Kansas City to 3-5-1. They last played in Kansas City on Nov. 12, 1904, when Coach **W.C. "Bummy" Booth's** next-to-last team lost to Haskell, 14-6.

• Nebraska now leads in the Oklahoma State series 34-2-1. The Cornhuskers' 35-game unbeaten streak against Oklahoma State is their longest ever against a conference opponent.

The only blemish during the streak was a 17-17 tie in 1973. ■



Joe WALKER

1998 Schedule/Record (5-0)

Aug. 29	vs. Louisiana Tech	\$ W, 56-27
Sept. 5	Ala.-Birmingham	W, 38-7
Sept. 12	@ California	W, 24-3
Sept. 26	Washington	W, 55-7
Oct. 3	vs. Oklahoma St.&	W, 24-17
Oct. 10	@ Texas A&M	1 p.m.
Oct. 17	Kansas	12:30 p.m.
Oct. 24	Missouri	12:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Texas	12:30 p.m.
Nov. 7	@ Iowa St.	1 p.m.
Nov. 14	@ Kansas St.	1:10 p.m.
Nov. 27	Colorado	1:30 p.m.

\$ Eddie Robinson Football Classic • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.
& Arrowhead Stadium • Kansas City, Mo.
(Times are subject to change and are Central)

BY THE NUMBERS

Oklahoma State vs Nebraska
October 3, 1998 • Kansas City, Missouri

Score By Quarters

Nebraska	0	3	14	7	—	24
Oklahoma St.	3	0	7	7	—	17

Team Stats

	NU	OSU
First Downs	12	19
Rushing	6	13
Passing	5	5
Penalty	1	1
Rushing Attempts	36	55
Yards Gained Rushing	110	203
Yards Lost Rushing	37	28
Net Yards Rushing	73	175
Net Yards Passing	142	180
Passes Attempted	16	24
Passes Completed	10	11
Had Intercepted	0	0
Total Plays	52	79
Total Net Yards	215	355
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.1	4.5
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	2-0
Penalties-Yards	1-15	10-59
Punts-Yards	8-343	8-335
Avg. Per Punt	42.9	41.9
Punt Returns-Yards	6-106	3-20
Interceptions-Yards	0-0	0-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	4-68	3-49
Possession Time	24:50	35:10



DeAngelo Evans led the Huskers with a mere 41 yards rushing, but the Huskers held on for the win.

Individual Leaders

NEBRASKA

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Evans, D.	15	41	2.7	9	1
Newcombe, B.	13	22	1.7	20	1
Makovicka, J.	6	9	1.5	5	0
Wiggins, S.	1	1	1.0	1	0
Crouch, E.	1	0	0.0	0	0

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Newcombe, B.	9-15-0	60.0	112	0
Crouch, E.	1-1-0	100.0	30	0

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Cheatham, K.	3	32	10.7	13	0
Davison, M.	3	31	10.3	15	0
Jackson, S.	2	70	35.0	40	0
Evans, D.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Wiggins, S.	1	4	4.0	4	0

Name	Att.	Good	LNG
Brown, K.	1	1	48

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Walker, J.	5	92	18.4	73	1
Wiggins, S.	1	14	14.0	14	0

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Wiggins, S.	4	68	17.0	21	0

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Swiney, E.	11	3	14	3-16	0	1-11
Foreman, J.	7	5	12	0	0	0
Ortiz, T.	6	5	11	1-1	0	0
Rucker, M.	6	4	10	0	0	0
Brown, M.	3	7	10	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	5	2	7	1-2	0	0
Wiltz, J.	2	5	7	1-1	0	0
Johnson, E.	4	2	6	1-1	0	0
Warren, S.	3	2	5	0	0	0
Jackson, J.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Polk, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Finley, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Toline, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Woodward, W.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Brown, R.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Miller, W.	0	1	1	0	0	0

Oklahoma St.

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Simmons, N.	26	114	4.4	12	0
Fobbs, J.	12	55	4.6	14	1
Aikins, B.	5	15	3.0	4	0
Halferty, J.	3	8	2.7	4	0
Brown, K.	1	2	2.0	2	0
Lindsay, T.	8	-19	-2.4	3	0

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Lindsay, T.	10-23-0	43.5	158	1
Elder, S.	1-1-0	100.0	22	0

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Howell, Ethan	2	72	36.0	67	1
Love, S.	2	36	18.0	25	0
Richardson, T.	2	2	1.0	4	0
Steggs, G.	1	41	41.0	41	0
Howell, Evan	1	22	22.0	22	0
Fobbs, J.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Simmons, N.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Grissom, W.	1	-3	-3.0	-3	0

Name	Att.	Good	LNG
Sydnies, T.	1	1	37

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Richardson, T.	3	20	6.7	8	0

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Fobbs, J.	2	39	19.5	22	0
White, R.	1	10	10.0	10	0

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Wright, K.	4	6	10	1-2	0	0
Alexander, T.	7	2	9	0	0	0
Cato, R.	6	3	9	4-17	0	1-10
Thompson, R.	5	2	7	0	0	0
Mallory, C.	4	1	5	2-22	0	2-22
Waddle, A.	3	2	5	1-1	0	0
Knauls, T.	1	4	5	1-4	0	0
Howell, Evan	4	0	4	0	0	0
LeBlanc, T.	3	1	4	3-4	0	1-1
Flowers, J.B.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Howell, Ethan	2	2	4	0	0	0
Bensen, T.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Weaver, A.	1	0	1	1-2	0	0

'98 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TD
Buckhalter, C.	5	54	337	67.4	3
Makovicka, J.	5	48	225	45.0	1
Evans, D.	2	28	187	93.5	4
Crouch, E.	4	25	134	33.5	4
Newcombe, B.	3	39	113	37.7	6
Alexander, D.	5	22	87	17.6	1
Miller, W.	5	12	72	14.4	2
Christo, M.	3	20	63	21.0	0
Wiggins, S.	5	4	32	6.4	0
Brown, L.	1	1	13	13.0	0
Runty, J.	2	1	5	2.5	0
Legate, E.	2	2	5	1.7	0
White, D.	4	1	4	1.0	0
Grager, N.	1	1	3	3.0	0
Kingston, B.	1	1	3	3.0	0
Tillery, A.	1	1	3	3.0	0
Stanislav, J.	1	1	1	1.0	0
London, F.	4	1	-2	-0.5	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Newcombe, B.	3	23-33-0	69.7	364	1
Crouch, E.	4	19-37-1	51.4	236	1
Christo, M.	3	14-17-0	82.4	196	2

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Davison, M.	5	12	113	9.4	22.6	0
Wiggins, S.	5	11	175	15.9	35.0	1
Cheatham, K.	5	10	88	8.8	17.6	0
Jackson, S.	5	9	246	27.3	49.2	2
Buckhalter, C.	5	5	27	5.4	5.4	0
Debates, T.J.	4	2	27	13.5	6.8	0
Haafke, B.	4	2	15	7.5	3.8	0
Evans, D.	2	2	14	7.0	7.0	0
Wistrom, T.	4	1	63	63.0	15.8	1
Makovicka, J.	5	1	17	17.0	3.4	0
Brown, L.	1	1	11	11.0	11.0	0

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, K.	5	5	3	48

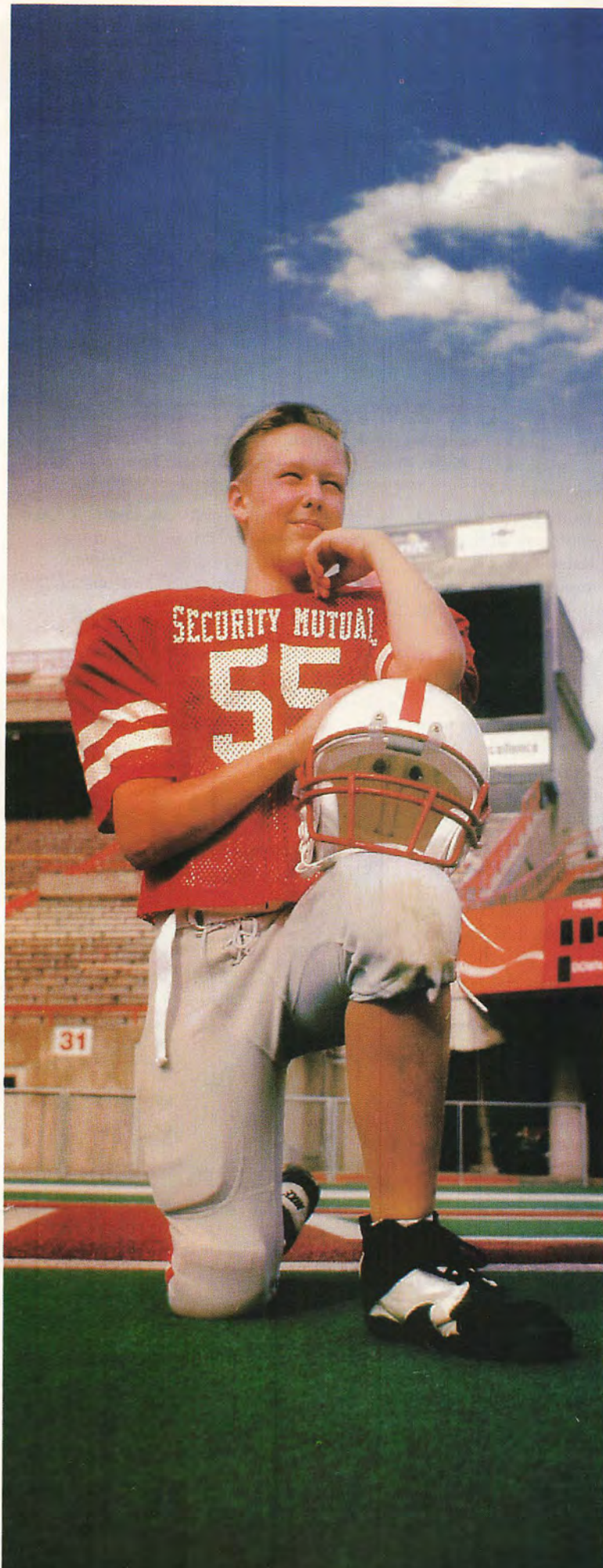
DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Foreman, J.	5	18	18	36	3-7	0	1-3
Brown, M.	5	16	19	35	2-3	1-1	0
Johnson, E.	5	17	14	31	4-16	0	3-15
Swiney, E.	5	21	9	30	3-16	0	1-11
Kelsay, C.	5	18	10	28	6-27	1-0	3-20
Walker, J.	5	13	11	24	2-6	1-0	0
Brown, R.	5	12	6	18	1-2	0	0
Shaw, B.	5	6	11	17	1-2	0	0
Ortiz, T.	4	8	8	16	2-4	0	1-3
Kaiser, L.	4	5	10	15	1-1	0	5-16
Warren, S.	5	8	7	15	0	0	0
Rucker, M.	5	7	7	14	0	0	0
Vanden Bosch, K.	5	6	6	12	4-36	0	2-29
Jackson, J.	5	6	3	9	1-9	0	1-9
Wiltz, J.	3	5	4	9	0	2-32	0
Polk, C.	5	6	1	7	2-5	1-16	0
Vedral, M.	5	3	3	6	0	0	0
Wills, A.	4	3	2	5	0	0	0
Craver, K.	3	2	3	5	0	0	0
Reynolds, K.	4	4	1	5	1-5	0	0
Toline, T.	5	4	1	5	0	0	0
Finley, C.	2	2	2	4	0	0	0
Lohr, J.	4	2	1	3	0	0	0
Raymond, S.	3	2	0	2	0	0	0
Slechta, J.	3	1	1	2	1-3	0	1-3
Wichmann, J.P.	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
Burrow, J.	4	1	1	2	0	0	0
Kohl, J.	4	0	2	2	0	0	0
Woodward, W.	1	1	0	1	0	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total Offensive Yards	2082	1643
Plays	350	364
Average Per Play	5.9	4.5
Average Per Game	416.4	328.6
Net Rushing Yards	1286	417
Attempts	263	171
TDs Rushing	21	2
Net Passing Yards	796	1226
Attempts	87	183
Completions	56	99
Average Per Pass	9.1	6.7
Average Per Catch	14.2	12.4
Average Per Game	159.2	245.2
TDs Passing	4	6
Sacks By-Yards	16-109	7-50
Fumbles-Lost	7-4	10-3
Penalties-Yards	25-220	54-395

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	49	59	41	48	0	197
Opponents	3	20	25	13	0	61



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A&M Ready To Make Statement

Aggies hope to avert the mistakes that doomed them in last season's Big 12 Championship game

By Mark DEROWITSCH

Forget about Washington. California kept it interesting. Louisiana Tech tried hard. Alabama-Birmingham? No way. Oklahoma State gave it their best shot.

Is there a team on the Nebraska schedule that will step up and beat the Cornhuskers?

Most college football experts believe that Texas A&M could be that opponent.

The Aggies haven't exactly lived up to their preseason billing. Texas A&M opened the season with a 23-14 loss to

Florida State but has since reeled off four straight wins. The Aggies haven't racked up any style points in beating Louisiana Tech, Southern Mississippi, North Texas and Kansas.

Texas A&M scored 104 points in its four wins, although the defense has been spectacular in allowing only 43.

So are the Aggies ready for the grind of the Big 12 Conference and the Huskers?

"I guess as a coach you'd like to be better off than where you are," Texas A&M coach R.C. Slocum said. "We'd like to have zero turnovers and be averaging 500 yards and 40 points a game, but it's never like that. We really don't know where we are on the scale."

The Aggies will find out how they measure up to one of the top programs in the nation on Oct. 10, when they play host to Nebraska at Kyle Field in College Station, Texas.

Texas A&M will have to have a super-human effort defensively to beat Nebraska, and the Aggies feel they have the players to do it.

Through their first five games, the Aggies have given up a paltry 275.8 yards of total offense per game and only 91.8 on the ground. Opponents are averaging just 2.7 yards per rushing attempt, have lost eight fumbles and had six passes intercepted.

North Texas coach Darrell Dickey, whose team lost to Texas A&M, 28-9, on Sept. 26, came away from the contest impressed with the Aggies "Wrecking Crew" defense.

"They have great team speed at every position on defense," he said. "Their scheme disrupted our offense all night long, and when we did execute, they would just run us down."

Aggies, this isn't North Texas anymore.

NEBRASKA
(5-0)

@

TEXAS A&M
(4-1)



DeAngelo EVANS



Dat NGUYEN

October 10, 1998 • 1:00 p.m. (CST)
Kyle Field • College Station, Texas

Even so, Texas A&M has some big-time play makers on defense, most notably inside linebacker Dat Nguyen, everybody's All-American and one of the top collegiate linebackers in college football.

Nguyen, a 5-foot-11, 215-pound senior, leads the Aggies with 40 total tackles, 22 of which were solo stops. He's also forced two fumbles and recovered three others in Texas A&M's

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	6	Kenny Cheatham***	6-4	210	Sr.
	3	Matt Davison*	6-0	180	So.
LT	69	Adam Julch**	6-5	315	Jr.
	72	Ben Gessford*	6-2	290	Sr.
LG	63	James Sherman**	6-2	295	Jr.
	54	Dominic Raiola	6-2	300	Fr.
C	59	Josh Heske***	6-3	290	Sr.
	54	Dominic Raiola	6-2	300	Fr.
RG	72	Ben Gessford*	6-2	290	Sr.
	55	Russ Hochstein*	6-3	280	So.
RT	65	Jason Schwab*	6-1	300	Jr.
	58	Dave Volk	6-4	280	Fr.
TE	88	Sheldon Jackson***	6-4	245	Sr.
	85	T.J. DeBates**	6-3	250	Jr.
QB	12	Bobby Newcombe*	6-0	195	So.
	7	Eric Crouch	6-0	200	Fr.
FB	45	Joel Makovicka***	5-11	240	Sr.
	15	Willie Miller*	6-0	230	So.
IB	4	DeAngelo Evans*	5-9	210	So.
	36	Correll Buckhalter*	6-0	225	So.
WB	5	Shevin Wiggins**	5-11	200	Sr.
	1	Frankie London**	6-0	180	Jr.
PK	14	Kris Brown***	5-10	205	Sr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chad Kelsay***	6-3	250	Sr.
	83	Kyle Vanden Bosch*	6-4	280	So.
NT	96	Steve Warren**	6-1	305	Jr.
	70	Jason Lohr	6-3	275	Fr.
DT	91	Loran Kaiser*	6-5	280	So.
	90	Jeremy Slichta	6-5	255	Fr.
RR	84	Mike Rucker***	6-6	250	Sr.
	81	Aaron Willis	6-2	240	Jr.
SLB	46	Brian Shaw**	6-1	215	Jr.
-or-	37	Tony Ortiz	6-0	215	Jr.
MLB	44	Jay Foreman***	6-1	240	Sr.
	13	Carlos Polk*	6-3	245	So.
WLB	1	Eric Johnson**	6-1	205	Sr.
	50	Julius Jackson**	6-0	235	Jr.
LCB	16	Erwin Swiney*	6-0	185	So.
	3	Keyuo Craver	6-0	180	Fr.
FS	21	Mike Brown**	5-10	205	Jr.
	14	Dion Booker	6-1	205	Fr.
ROV	25	Joe Walker*	5-10	200	So.
	29	Gregg List**	6-0	220	Jr.
RCB	22	Ralph Brown**	5-9	180	Jr.
	11	Jerome Peterson**	5-7	185	Jr.
P	23	Bill Lafleur***	5-11	200	Sr.

Tentative 2 Deeps

TEXAS A&M DEFENSE

LE	95	Rocky Bernard	6-3	269	So.
	97	Lonnie Madison	6-3	250	Fr.
NG	96	Ron Edwards	6-3	262	So.
	90	Stephen Young	6-0	268	So.
RE	99	Ronald Flemons	6-5	247	So.
	55	Terry Nichols	6-0	253	Fr.
OLB	43	Warrick Holdman	6-1	230	Sr.
	23	Jason Glenn	6-0	220	So.
ILB	46	Cornelius Anthony	6-0	224	So.
	44	Sean Coryatt	6-0	215	Jr.
ILB	9	Dat Nguyen	5-11	221	Sr.
	55	Chad Frantzen	6-2	210	Jr.
OLB	40	Roylin Bradley	6-1	221	So.
	58	Chris Thierry	6-2	221	Jr.
CB	39	Jason Webster	5-10	178	Jr.
	18	Sedrick Curry	6-2	192	Jr.
CB	26	Jay Brooks	5-9	199	Fr.
	21	Shun Horn	5-9	190	Sr.
FS	30	Brandon Jennings	6-1	191	Jr.
	5	Toya Jones	6-2	204	Sr.
SS	48	Rich Coady	6-1	210	Sr.
	1	Michael Jameson	5-10	179	So.
P	6	Shane Lechler	6-2	220	Jr.

TEXAS A&M OFFENSE

SE	80	Chris Cole	6-0	186	Jr.
	16	Aaron Oliver	6-0	198	Sr.
RT	78	Andy Vincent	6-3	301	Jr.
	79	Shea Holder	6-5	304	Jr.
RG	62	Semisi Heimuli	6-2	303	Jr.
	71	Chris Valletta	6-2	306	So.
C	77	Seth McKinney	6-3	293	Fr.
	56	Toby McCarthy	6-2	283	So.
LG	73	Cameron Spikes	6-3	310	Sr.
	70	Moses Vakalahi	6-5	307	Fr.
LT	53	Rex Tucker	6-5	290	Sr.
	91	Tango McCauley	6-4	290	Fr.
TE	89	Dan Campbell	6-5	262	Sr.
-or-	87	Derrick Spiller	6-3	257	Sr.
FL	88	Leroy Hodge	6-2	204	Jr.
	42	Chris Taylor	5-10	176	So.
QB	15	Randy McCown	6-1	210	Jr.
	7	Brannan Stewart	6-2	221	Sr.
B	28	Ja'Mar Toombs	6-1	235	Fr.
	38	Will Simpson	5-11	240	Sr.
A	34	Dante Hall	5-8	190	Jr.
-or-	8	Sirr Parker	5-11	190	Sr.
PK	37	Russell Bynum	5-9	176	So.

3-4 defensive scheme. Nguyen will enter the Aggies' game against Nebraska with 42 consecutive starts.

"Dat Nguyen is an All-American in every sense," Slocum said. "He comes to play every day, every down. It doesn't matter if it's a spring practice, or the Big 12 Championship Game, he is always ready to play. He has the ability to make everybody around him better."

Nguyen is not the only standout on the Aggies' defense. Outside linebacker Warrick Holdman has put up impressive numbers this season, recording 20 solo tackles, five tackles for loss and two sacks. He can also cover receivers when he's not rushing the quarterback. Strong safety Rich Coady leads the team with two interceptions.

The Aggies didn't have very good luck figuring out a way to stop Nebraska last season. When the two teams met in the Big 12 Championship game, the Huskers rolled up 536 yards of total offense en route to a convincing 54-15 victory.

Texas A&M's offense has struggled this season, gaining just 279 yards per game of total offense.

Quarterback Brannndon Stewart, the starter for the past two years after transferring from Tennessee, where he spent a season as Peyton Manning's backup, hasn't lived up to his preseason billing. Stewart has thrown for only 376 yards and one touchdown during the Aggies' first five games.

"Brannndon has always had the burden that he is supposed to be an all-world quarterback that makes everything happen when he's out there," Slocum said. "The reality is that not

many quarterbacks do that. Most guys have ups and downs in their play, and Brannndon has been like most. He's had some brilliant moments for us and some not so brilliant, but that's the way it is for most quarterbacks. I'm not sure that it hasn't been burdensome at times for him to try to live up to the expectations of what others had for him."

Slocum turned to Randy McCown to start last week's game against Kansas, and the junior responded with an average effort in which he completing only nine of 18 passes for 89 yards in a narrow 24-21 win over the Jayhawks.

Having two veteran quarterbacks on his team is a luxury that R.C. Slocum enjoys having.

"One of the advantages we have is that we have two experienced quarterbacks, and that I don't have any reservations playing Randy McCown," he said. "I thought we could win with him. In the coaches meeting over the past few weeks and after evaluating tape, it was apparent that Randy was practicing at a level very comparable to Brannndon. So if you're in a game and things are not going quite so well, then out of fairness I owed it to Randy to let him go and play."

The biggest help to either quarterback has been the emergence of split end Chris Cole. Cole leads the team with 23 receptions (the rest of the team has combined for 35 catches) and three touchdowns. Cole is averaging 77 yards per game.

"Chris Cole has been a big-play guy," Slocum said. "You could see it coming. Last year he made plays and has been getting better. Chris is on a roll right now. He's getting better, and he's working to get better. His expectation level is high and that's helped us immensely."

Running backs Dante Hall and Sirr Parker give the Aggies a solid 1-2 punch in the backfield. Combined, Hall and Parker are averaging 110 yards per game while they are splitting time.

Hall and Parker will have to increase their numbers this week against a stout Nebraska defense that has been stingy against the run. ■

TALE OF THE APE

Who Has The Edge?

QUARTERBACKS

Bobby Newcombe is healthy again while A&M's Brannndon Stewart was benched in favor of Randy McCown. In this equation, one Husker is better than two Aggies.



RUNNING BACKS

DeAngelo Evans gives the Huskers another big-play guy in the backfield. He averaged 11.2 yards per carry in his first game in more than a year and a half. Dante Hall and Sirr Parker are good, but Nebraska's depth wins out.



RECEIVERS

The Aggies have a big-play receiver in Chris Cole, but there's not much after him. The Huskers have a bunch of players who get the job done, even if it's mostly blocking. Shevin Wiggins had his best receiving game last week.



OFFENSIVE LINE

New line, same results for Huskers against the Aggies. It could be the biggest ground show in the history of Kyle Field, and it all starts up front. A&M's front five are looking to establish some credibility.



DEFENSIVE LINE

The Aggies are only giving up 83 yards per game on the ground meaning they must be doing something right against the likes of Louisiana Tech and North Texas. Nebraska will test that front four.



LINEBACKERS

Dat Nguyen is one of the best players in the nation and leads a talented group of Aggie linebackers. Huskers have been solid here, but Nguyen is capable of taking over a game at the drop of a hat.



SECONDARY

The Memorial Stadium air shows ended against Washington. Looks like NU is in rare form again. A&M's defensive backs are short but fast. Neither team throws the ball very much anyway.



SPECIAL TEAMS

This area is often overlooked, but it's an area that wins games. With Kris Brown and Bill Lafleur kicking and Joe Walker running back kicks, the Huskers usually dominate this area. A&M is still looking for a kicker.



LB DAT NGUYEN

VS

FB JOEL MAKOVICKA

KEY MATCHUP

The one constant in Nebraska's backfield this season has been senior fullback Joel Makovicka. And it is not surprising that Nebraska's triple option offense goes as Makovicka goes.

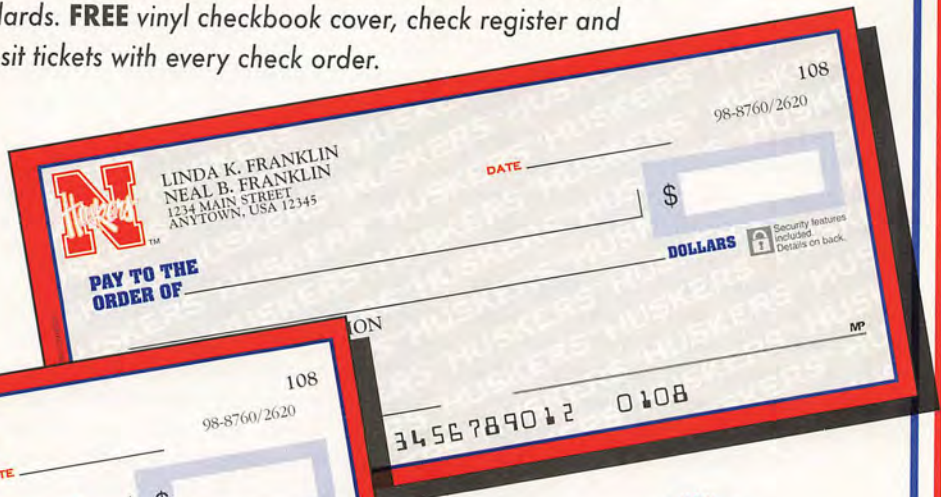
I-backs Correll Buckhalter and DeAngelo Evans get most of the carries and most of the accolades, but it's Makovicka that makes Nebraska's offense potent. Makovicka is averaging 5.1 yards every time he touches the ball. And it's the tough yards up the middle of the line that are designed to soften opposing defenses that Makovicka picks up in chunks.

If Texas A&M hopes to slow down the Big Red rushing machine, Nguyen will have to play a key role. If Makovicka gets rolling, the Huskers could have another dominating day against A&M, likening back to the 536-yard performance in the Big 12 Championship game. If Nguyen can stop the Huskers from running between the tackles, however, the Aggies will have a chance of pulling off an upset.

Nguyen won't be able to do it alone, but if he and his defensive teammates can contain Makovicka, the Aggies' chances of winning improve dramatically. ■

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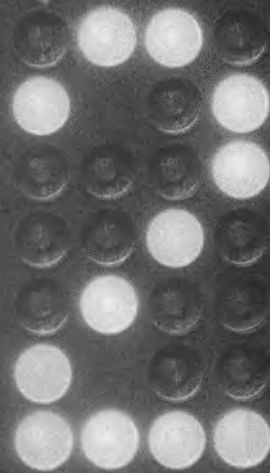
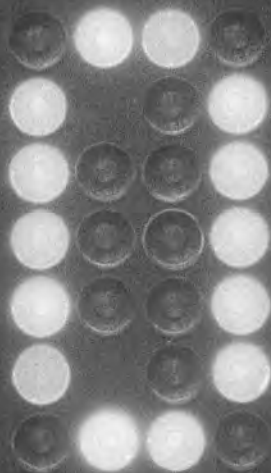
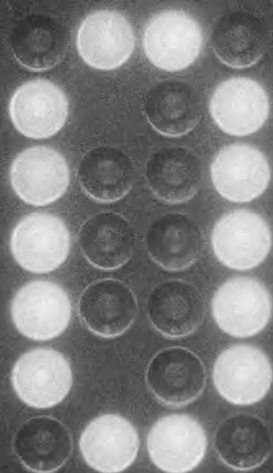
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Line Of The Times



To play on the offensive line at Nebraska, one must have the ability to not only measure up against the competition, but the tradition established by former Cornhusker greats

By Mike Babcock

JOSH HESKEW RECEIVED A LETTER with no return address a week before the Washington game. The letter was postmarked Orlando, Fla. And it was addressed to "Mrs. Josh Heskew."

That should have been a tipoff on the contents of the envelope. The anonymous "letter" was insulting. "How does it feel to be the captain of the worst offensive line in America?" it asked.

The letter was posted outside the equipment room window the next week.

Heskew took the cowardly criticism in good-natured stride.

"I just wish they would have put down a return address," Heskew told the *Omaha World-Herald*. "I would have written back."

The week after the California game, the *Lincoln Journal Star* offered a three-game grade assessment of the Cornhuskers. The offensive line received the lowest of the grades, a C-plus.

Heskew didn't see the newspaper

story, but that didn't mean it escaped his attention.

"I heard about it," the senior center said. "There's not really too much you can do about something like that. We just go out and play our best."

"I guess when we get that 800 yards rushing, we'll get an A-plus."

Offensive line coach Milt Tenopir was not amused by the low grade, calling attention to it during the weekly meeting of the Extra Point Club on the Monday after it was published.

"Coach Tenopir doesn't like anybody criticizing his linemen," said Heskew. "He takes care of us."

Tenopir wasn't arguing that the offensive line deserved an A-plus on its first-quarter grade report, though such a mark would have accurately reflected the effort of the linemen.

Overall, however, the line was "not where you would have liked because you've had so many kids banged around in there," Tenopir said. "You'd like to have the kids feeling good and healthy."

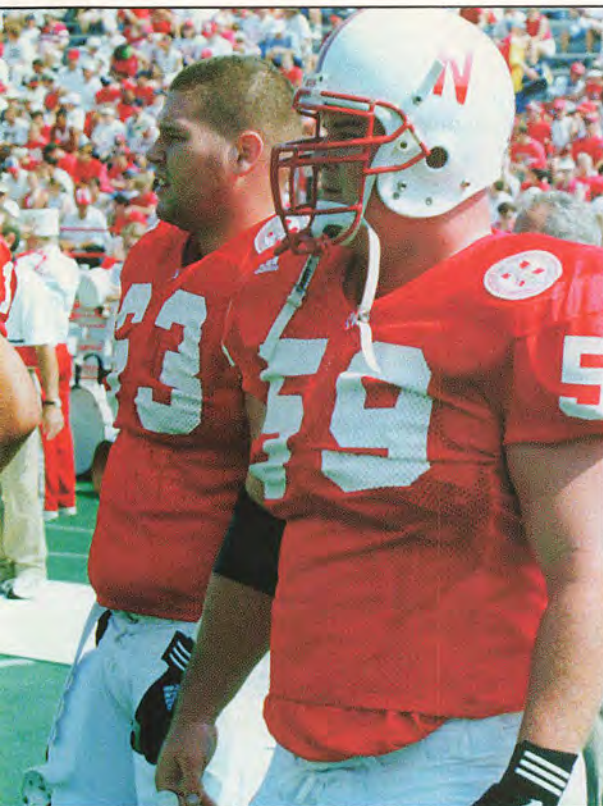
"But you've got to admire them for gutting it out."

Senior Ben Gessford was the only starter who wasn't hobbled early on. Junior Adam Julch, who underwent ankle surgery in May, was slowed by a sore knee. Junior Jason Schwab was hampered by a groin pull. Junior James Sherman was bothered by a sore ankle, and Heskew had back problems.

In addition, junior Jeff Clausen, a projected starter at tackle, hasn't been able to play because of recurring knee problems. It's not clear when he will be able to return to action.

Despite some physical discomfort, Schwab and Julch never took a break during the California game. Schwab played all 90 offensive snaps and Julch played 86, according to Tenopir. And Heskew disregarded his back pain to set a school record for knockdown or "pancake" blocks, with 23.

Such performances are evidence of Heskew's playing at a level comparable to that of the best centers in



In addition to Jason Schwab (not pictured), Ben Gessford, Brandt Wade, James Sherman and Josh Heskew have overcome injuries and inexperience to give Nebraska solid play up front.

Cornhusker history, including Aaron Taylor, who earned All-America honors there as a junior, Jake Young, Dave Rimington, Mark Traynowicz, Bill Lewis, Tom Davis and Rik Bonness.

Still, Nebraska's offense wasn't gaining yards at what has come to be regarded as a typical pace, particularly by rushing. Three games into the season, the Cornhuskers ranked 18th nationally in total offense and sixth in

rushing, averaging 259.7 yards per game — the lowest since 1976.

The offensive line was held accountable for that statistical dropoff, despite the fact that other offensive starters also were injured, most notably quarterback Bobby Newcombe, who missed two of the first three games, and I-back DeAngelo Evans, who was sidelined for all three.

Even if everyone had been healthy from the opener on, the offensive line was going to need a few games to develop. Not only was Heskew the lone returning starter, but also those who were stepping into starting positions weren't all that experienced. Plus, capable backups had to be identified.

"You've got to have somebody that keeps you fresh," said Tenopir. "It's not so bad if the day is mild, 60- to 70-degree weather; it doesn't bother you so much. But when it's hot and humid, you're going to get weary. The kids are pumping as hard as they can, as long as they can, and they get tired."

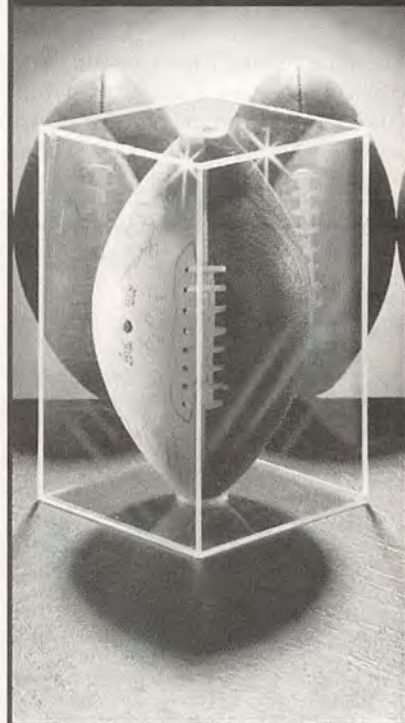
That was dramatically illustrated in 1996, when Nebraska's school-record 26-game winning streak was snapped at Arizona State. The starting offensive linemen played the whole game.

Depth in the offensive line was a

Josh Heskew, celebrating with quarterback Bobby Newcombe against Washington, says that offensive line coach Milt Tenopir "doesn't like anybody criticizing his linemen."



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concern early on for the Husker coaching staff.

"I don't know that as we go through the season that necessarily we'll be deep," coach Frank Solich said before the California game.

Depth, however, doesn't always require two players at each position.

"When you talk about depth, you don't necessarily have to be too deep (in numbers) every place," said Tenopir.

"You just have to have somebody who can give each guy along the line a blow."

Last season, for example, Matt Hoskinson was a backup at both guard spots and center. He didn't start, but he played as much as those

who did.

"'Hoss' was a valuable guy," Tenopir said. "We were fortunate to have Matt. He was one of the most enthusiastic guys I'd ever coached, and he got so much out of himself that he was kind of an inspirational figure in there."

"That's what I like about the two young ones. They're kind of fireballs. They don't know anything else but to go hard. They understand it takes tremendous effort to play at this level."

The "two young ones" Tenopir referred to are Dominic Raiola, a red-shirt freshman from Honolulu, and Russ Hochstein, a third-year sophomore.

"Those two guys have figured into the mix a lot quicker than I had anticipated," said Tenopir. "They've got the right disposition about them."

Both have played guard, and Raiola also has backed up Heskeew at center. Playing both center and guard is "a little bit unusual" for redshirt freshmen, according to Tenopir. "Center, of course, is a very demanding position because you've got to snap that puppy first," he said.

"But there are a lot of coordinating things they do, guards and centers, so it's not a matter of knowing what you're going to do as much as knowing how you're going to do it."

Even so, Raiola is "fairly advanced for a young kid," Tenopir said.

The development of Raiola and Hochstein at guard allowed Tenopir to rotate Gessford, who began as the starting right guard, with Julch and Schwab at tackle during the Washington game.

Dave Volk, a redshirt freshman from Battle Creek, Neb., (Hoskinson's hometown) also has made "a great deal of progress" since the opening game, according to Tenopir.

"The biggest thing with all those kids who haven't been in the heat of action is just being able to react to quick changes and that type of thing," Tenopir said. "It isn't so much knowing who you're going to block; it's how you're going to get there. What are you going to do if they switch defenses or 'stem'?"



Matt Hoskinson was the inspirational leader of the Cornhusker offensive line last season, and although he wasn't a full-time starter, he received substantial playing time and provided quality depth.

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"Stemming" is when defensive linemen move just before the center snap.

"The poise factor figures in there," said Tenopir. "Most young kids get in there, and they're so anxious to play and anxious to do well that they sometimes lose concentration and get procedure penalties. Those are things you can't put up with, of course, because they affect drives just like an incomplete pass.

"Being able to focus is the critical thing for kids to learn. Things happen so fast up there, it doesn't necessarily mean the kid is lacking in being a smart player as much as being poised."

Prior to the season, Heskew predicted the offensive line would measure up to Nebraska standards in time.

"We've got some young players who will be a factor this season," he said.

Still, the standard for offensive lines is high. Nebraska has led the nation in rushing in 11 of the last 18

NFL Pipeline

Recent Nebraska OL Draft Choices

1998	Aaron Taylor, Indianapolis (7th)
1997	Adam Treu, Oakland (3rd)
	Chris Dishman, Arizona (4th)
1995	Zach Wiegert, St. Louis (2nd)
	Brenden Stai, Pittsburgh (3rd)
	Rob Zatechka, NY Giants (4th)
1994	Lance Lundberg, N. Orleans (7th)
1993	Will Shields, Kansas City (3rd)

seasons and averaged more than 300 rushing yards per game in all but two of the last 21 seasons.

And eight former Cornhusker offensive lineman are currently active in the NFL.

As the line goes, so goes Nebraska's offense. That's a given. And the line will go just fine when everyone is healthy and has had an opportunity to work together, according to Heskew.

"The week off has done a lot for our offensive line," he said prior to the Washington game.

Tenopir concurred. "I have confidence in our guys," he said. "They've played well, and most of them have played through some injuries. They're healing up, and they'll be better than ever."

Heskew would have expressed similar sentiments in responding to the letter from Orlando.

The problem was, he had no return address to which he could send such a response. ■



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NU's Top 10 QBs...

He was so impressive as a freshman that Bob Devaney looked at him as a potential starter in 1971, despite the return of Jerry Tagge and Van Brownson

David HUMM

The pressures on Dave Humm were considerable by the time he was a senior at Nebraska.

Among other things, "he's been accused of being cocky," the *Lincoln Journal-Star* reported prior to the 1974 season. "Some people say he wears his hair too long. Others call him skinny and fragile."

And, the story said, he was "criticized for throwing too many interceptions."

Humm threw 36 interceptions in three seasons, the most in Nebraska history. But he also threw and completed more passes for more yards than any Cornhusker, before or since.

Five of Nebraska's 10 highest single-game passing yardage totals were his, including the top two. He completed 25-of-36 passes for a school-record 297 yards against Wisconsin in

1973 and followed two weeks later by completing 20-of-29 passes for 292 yards against Missouri.

Nebraska was ranked No. 2 in the *Associated Press* poll when it went to Columbia, Mo., in mid-October and lost to the No. 12-ranked Tigers, 13-12. Missouri went ahead 13-6 with 2:03 remaining, but Humm took Nebraska 72 yards on four plays, three of them

Humm threw 36 interceptions in three seasons, the most in Nebraska history. But he also threw and completed more passes for more yards than any Cornhusker, before or since.

passes, to cut the score to 13-12.

An almost-certain Rich Sanger extra-point kick would have given the Cornhuskers a tie. But Osborne elected to go for two, on a Humm pass intended for sophomore split end Dave Shamblin, who was playing in place of senior Frosty Anderson, who had suffered a dislocated shoulder early in the game.

"I thought the two-point pass was thrown about where it had to be," Tom Osborne would recall many years later. "(Shamblin) just didn't have enough left to go get it. He was totally spent."

The loss, his first as head

coach, showed not only Osborne's will to win, which was more dramatically illustrated in the 1984 Orange Bowl game, but also Humm's ability to perform under pressure. That quality might have been mistaken for what some regarded as the aforementioned cockiness.

In Bob Devaney's final season as coach in 1972, Humm set the school record by passing for 2,074 yards, completing 140-of-266. When he left

Nebraska as a fifth-round draft pick of the Oakland Raiders, he held or shared four Big Eight passing records, 12 Cornhusker records and one NCAA record.

He completed 15 consecutive passes in a 56-0 victory against Kansas at Lawrence in 1974 to tie an NCAA record for a single game — a record that was subsequently broken.

Nebraska fans expected no less when he arrived from Las Vegas (Bishop Gorman), Nev., where he was a prep All-American. His reputation was such that Alabama coach Bear Bryant brought former Crimson Tide quarterback Joe Namath along on a home-recruiting visit.

The Cornhusker media guide for

FIELD GENERALS

Dennis Claridge	1961-63
Bob Churchich	1964-66
Jerry Tagge	1969-71
Dave Humm	1972-74
Vince Ferragamo	1975-76
Turner Gill	1980-83
Steve Taylor	1985-88
Gerry Gdowski	1987-89
Tommie Frazier	1992-95
Scott Frost	1996-97

1972 noted that he had been described as "the finest quarterback prospect ever." And he had yet to throw a pass in a varsity game.

He had been impressive on the freshman team in 1970, however, completing 53 of 92 passes (.576) for 771 yards and nine touchdowns, with six interceptions in four games.

He was so impressive as a freshman, in fact, that Devaney looked at him as a potential starter in 1971, despite the return of Jerry Tagge and Van Brownson, experienced seniors who had led the Cornhuskers to the AP national championship the previous season.

"We have no qualms about playing a sophomore if he's the best quarterback," Devaney said at the time, referring to Humm. "We've told all three of them that whoever of them is playing the best will be our starter.

"David doesn't want to be redshirted if he can beat the other two out of the job. And he'll get that chance. But if it is so close among them that if we have to flip a coin, he won't win the flip."

If Humm did emerge in fall camp, indications were that Devaney might redshirt one of the seniors, with Brownson the most likely candidate because of shoulder surgery the previous spring.

As it turned out, however, Humm redshirted, and Tagge led the team to a second consecutive national championship, starting all 13 games in 1971, with Brownson in reserve.

Humm remained healthy during spring practice in 1972, while junior Steve Runtz underwent shoulder surgery and sophomore Terry Luck underwent knee surgery and was redshirted. As a result, Humm was the starter from the beginning of his sophomore season — which was his best statistically, in part because he had wingback Johnny Rodgers, the 1972 Heisman Trophy winner, to throw to.

Humm would finish fifth in voting for the Heisman Trophy two years later, behind Ohio State's Archie Griffin, and would earn All-America honors from the American Football Coaches-Kodak, *Football News*, *The Sporting News* and *Time* magazine. He was consensus All-Big Eight first team.

Humm was the most prolific passer in Cornhusker history, breaking records set by Jerry Tagge, Bob Churchich and Frank Patrick, who threw for 290 yards against Oklahoma

10 QUESTIONS

Huskers Illustrated talks with strongside linebacker BRIAN SHAW

1 Why, in your opinion, has NASCAR become so popular?

Because old what's-his-face (Jeff Gordon) is winning all the time. Actually, I don't watch NASCAR that much, but I know he's winning a lot.

2 Who's the hardest player on the team to tackle?

I'll have to say Joel Makovicka. He's a truck. When you hit him, he doesn't go down. And you know, he's got that big booty on him, so that's going to keep him going a long ways.

3 Who's your favorite comedian?

I'm a (Jerry) Seinfeld fan. There's something realistic about it. It's just a weird sense of humor that gets me rolling every once in awhile.

4 Did Kenneth Starr's report go too far?

I didn't read the Starr report, but I have been watching a little bit (of Bill Clinton's videotaped grand jury testimony) on TV. It's kind of interesting. I didn't know if he was going to make it through without breaking down. But I don't know if I needed to see all that stuff.

5 Better rock n roll — 1980s or 1990s?

I'm a country fan, and country has been getting better and better all the time. If I had to go with rock, I'd say the 1980s. But I'm a true-blue country fan. Garth Brooks, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw — they're all pretty good. I try to get to the concerts whenever they come around.

6 What's your favorite food at the training table?

I'm a breakfast fan. I'm going to have to go with the ol' scrambled eggs and bacon in the morning. The eggs are made right in front you, so I know they're fresh.

7 Jerry Springer Show — quality entertainment or trash?

Trash, but I watch it every once in a while if it's on. Sometimes it catches your eye. But if it's not on, I'm not going to change the channel to it.

8 What's the best piece of advice you can give to an incoming freshman?

Just be ready to go, because there's going to be a lot of competition and you're really going to have to hit hard. And the weight program is there, so use it.

9 What's your biggest pet peeve?

My biggest pet peeve is screaming. I hate it when girls scream. You know, they see each other and go, 'Ahhhhhhhhh!' In high school, I absolutely hated it. There's no need for screaming, but girls sure seem to do it a lot.

10 What's the worst movie you've seen recently?

It was a Jean-Claude Van Damme movie *Knock Off*. It was just bad. There was nothing to it. You'd see Jean-Claude kick somebody in slow motion, and then all of a sudden, they'd fast forward with all these Chinese guys running after him. Nah. It just didn't work for me. It was bad. ■



Scott Bralim

Did anyone like *Knock Off*? Add Shaw to the list giving it a thumbs down.

in 1967. The 6-foot-7, 225-pound Patrick broke Nebraska's single-season passing yardage record as a sophomore, throwing for 1,449 yards and seven touchdowns.

Despite his extraordinary passing statistics, Humm played on teams that couldn't defeat Oklahoma, a shortcoming for which, as quarterback, he took a disproportionate share of the blame.

He regularly spoke at schools, and a common question was, "What's it

like to lose to Oklahoma?"

"That's one question I get every place," Humm told the *Lincoln Journal-Star* before his final season. "It's an uncomfortable question, but it's one most of the kids ask. The kids in this state, based on the letters I get and the questions they ask, are really involved (in Cornhusker football)."

Nebraska's offense has changed dramatically since he played.

But that kind of involvement has remained the same. ■

Nebraska offensive line coach Milt Tenopir had to calm Dominic Raiola before the California game. When the Cornhusker players entered Memorial Stadium at Berkeley just before the opening kickoff, Raiola "was running up and down the field, swinging his towel," Tenopir said with a laugh.

"I had to tell him he was a lineman, that he had to settle down a little bit."

Offensive linemen tend to be more reserved. But Raiola, a redshirt freshman from Honolulu, Hawaii, "shows

kind of control it (emotion). But to a certain extent, you can be pretty exuberant on the field. I feel it helps me a lot. I get psyched up for the games."

Getting psyched up is among the reasons he is playing a significant role on the offensive line this season. His intensity and physical ability have combined to earn him a place in the regular rotation.

Raiola is Nebraska's first scholarship football player from Hawaii, where he attended St. Louis, an all-boys school and perennial football power in Honolulu. St. Louis has won 12 consecutive state championships and produced "a lot of (NCAA) Division I-A players,"

away, and it didn't matter how far.

"I just wanted to go to the best program." And that was Nebraska's.

"If I didn't go here, I would have gone to Washington," he said. "But I came here and that was the clincher. It was nothing but the best."

Raiola, who made the Big 12 Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll last fall, was impressed by Nebraska's academic support system as well as "the winning tradition . . . I lost one game in my high school career," he said. "I like to win, and I knew winning was a big thing at Nebraska."

Secondary coach George Darlington made the first recruiting contact. "But what impressed me the



Scott Brumby

his feelings a little more than most guys do on the field," Tenopir said.

"He does it in an exuberant-type way. He's that kind of a guy."

Raiola, who is playing center and guard, admits to such a character trait. He was the same way in high school. "I always expressed a lot of emotion on the field," he said. "I take it very seriously."

"Playing offensive line, you have to

Hawaiian Delight

Nebraska's first scholarship player from Hawaii, Dominic Raiola didn't throw in the towel while waiting for his chance to show they do more than surf in America's paradise

Raiola said.

Olin Kreutz, an All-American offensive lineman for the Washington Huskies last season and now a Chicago Bears rookie, is a St. Louis High graduate — as well as Raiola's good friend.

Cornhusker freshman Tony Tata, a redshirt linebacker, also is from St. Louis High.

"People look at it like Hawaii's a small state, with only little high schools. But there's good competition out there," said Raiola, a three-year starter. "It prepared me well."

Nebraska won a recruiting battle with Washington, UCLA, Stanford and Utah to get Raiola, who visited Lincoln the week after he visited Washington, then cancelled visits to the other three.

"I knew I wasn't going to Hawaii," he said. "I knew I was going to go

most was when (former) Coach (Tom) Osborne called me," said Raiola.

He was impressed, not only by Osborne's calling him, but also by the circumstances under which Osborne called. "I think he was on the plane coming back from Oklahoma," Raiola said.

"They had just beaten Oklahoma 70-26 or something (the actual score was 73-21), and I thought somebody was playing a joke on me. 'Really, is this Coach Osborne?' And he goes: 'Yes, this is Coach Osborne.'"

"I was pretty impressed with that."

The prospect of going to school a long way from home didn't intimidate Raiola.

"I'm used to being away from home," he said. "I used to go to New York pretty much every year. My mom's from New York, so we'd go for a vacation there every summer. Sometimes I'd go by myself."

The cold weather doesn't bother him. "I took my (recruiting) trip in the winter, so it was pretty cold," he said. "It's kind of nice to have cool weather. You don't sweat as much walking to class."

Raiola played guard in high school, but he was moved to center during his redshirt season a year ago. Prior to the start of two-a-day practices this season, he began taking snaps at guard, too. "Coach Tenopir asked if I had a problem with that," Raiola said. "I said I'll do whatever I can to help the team."

After Josh Heskeew completes his eligibility this season, Raiola might settle in at center. "I hope so," he said. "But if Coach Tenopir asks me to play guard, I'll do whatever is best for the team."

Raiola expected to redshirt his first season at Nebraska. So that didn't come as a surprise, even though, like most scholarship freshmen, he would have preferred to play immediately.

Last season was a learning experience, lining up on the scout team against All-Americans Jason Peter and Grant Wistrom. "I knew we could improve by going against the best," said Raiola.

"I just wanted to get as much as I could done my redshirt year."

Not only did he have to learn a complicated new position, center, but also "our offense in high school was 75 to 80 percent passing, so we hardly ever run-blocked," he said. "It wasn't real difficult, but the schemes here are pretty difficult. There are so many defenses that colleges run."

As for adjusting to guard this season, Raiola says he "kind of picked it up on reps in practice and watching the older guys like (junior James) Sherman and (senior Ben) Gessford."

"I just picked up on their ways of doing things. I was a guard in high school, but this is a lot different."

Raiola also is the No. 1 deep snapper, his most difficult responsibility.

After watching home games from the stands and road games on television last season, Raiola was eager to suit up and play. The first two games at Memorial Stadium were fun. But the third game at California was special. "I was real excited there," more so even than for the first two games, he said.

"I was getting more into the offense, getting more confidence, so I was more excited to play."

Hence the towel waving, and Tenopir's attempt to tone him down. ■



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Huskies Keep Pace

RUMORS

The Huskers' nine verbal commitments ranks them second in the Big 12 behind Texas (17). LSU leads the country with 19, while Penn State has 18. Michigan State (17) and Notre Dame (14) trail slightly. Of course, all verbal commitments are non-binding, and athletes can take official visits elsewhere.

Running back **Dontae Walker** (5-10, 200 pounds, with 4.45 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Clinton, Miss., is a running back who is drawing tremendous attention from the Cornhuskers. A year ago, he rushed for 2,042 yards and 28 TDs. Walker is looking at Mississippi State, LSU, Nebraska, Florida State and North Carolina.

Paul Arnold (6-1, 208, 4.4) of Seattle (Kennedy) is another intriguing running back who is taking a look at the Huskers. Arnold has been timed at 4.33, and Washington, Stanford, Colorado and Nebraska are his top four choices.

Cory Redding (6-5, 235, 4.6) of Galena Park (North Shore), Texas, is quite possibly the nation's top linebacker prospect. Redding has the speed to play outside linebacker, but the size to line up and be a pass rusher from a defensive end position. He is averaging 14 tackles and two sacks per game this season. Redding is looking hard at Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Nebraska and Michigan.

Mike Nattiel (6-2, 210, 4.65) of Newberry, Fla., is a linebacker whose brother, Ricky, starred with the Denver Broncos. Nebraska trails Florida by a slim margin.

Chris Buda (6-2, 300, 5.25) of Tallahassee (Lincoln), Fla., who can bench 330 and squat 520, is one of the top offensive linemen in the South. Tennessee and Syracuse lead early, but Nebraska is closing the gap with Florida and Florida State.

Dwight Jackson (6-1, 205, 4.5) of Belle Glade (Glades Central), Fla., is a talented defensive back who loves the Huskers over North Carolina and Georgia Tech.

B.J. Edwards (5-9, 165, 4.4) of Stone Mountain, Ga., will either line up at wide receiver or in the secondary in college. He loves the Huskers, along with North Carolina State, Ohio State, Clemson and Georgia.

Quarterback **Bobby Moore** (6-1, 190, 4.6) of Northport (Tuscaloosa County), Ala., is a versatile athlete who can play a number of positions. He is an option quarterback, but he can throw on the run. Nebraska has offered but is in a tough competition with Alabama, Auburn, Mississippi State and Georgia. ■

Sizing Up Offensive Line Prospects

Always a strength at Nebraska, the offensive line should only get stronger with the signing of several top recruits

By James HALE

The Nebraska recruiting juggernaut continues to amaze all who are watching. We are only three weeks into the season, and the Nebraska Cornhuskers have already earned their ninth verbal commitment of the season, picking up two more this past week.

Once again Nebraska continues to recruit at its own pace.

By bringing in over 3,500 athletes at their summer camps, Nebraska has the ability to use what is, in essence, an extra scouting and evaluation period that very few other programs can match.

The Cornhuskers take advantage of that early and often. Nebraska coaches also have interest in players who haven't been in their camp, but they certainly have a great pool of athletes to compare to. This allows them to evaluate only certain athletes who fit the Cornhuskers' needs.

Shaun Coleman (6-foot-4, 212 pounds, with 4.4 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Aurora (Regis Jesuit), Colo., is one of the finest all-around athletes in the country and recently gave Nebraska his verbal commitment. A super run/pass quarterback on the prep level, Coleman knows his days are numbered on offense.

"If they want to play me at quarterback, that would be OK with me, but I don't think that is what they have in mind," Coleman said. "They want me to play on defense and to be

honest, I am looking forward to that. I will either be an outside linebacker or strong safety at Nebraska, and I can't wait. I am looking forward to playing defense, and I am real excited about it."

It's ironic that the Huskers look at Coleman as a defensive specialist, while the rest of us see a quarterback who seems tailor-made for the Husker offense. As a junior, Coleman rushed for 1,385 yards and nine touchdowns while also showing off an impressive arm, hitting 55 of 99 passes for 916 yards and eight touchdowns — after starting at offensive tackle as a sophomore.

The Cornhuskers will have to sweat pro baseball, as Coleman is a possible top draft pick after hitting .460 with 11 home runs and 40 runs batted in. A centerfielder, Coleman admits he has a special love in his heart for baseball.

"I will listen to what the pro scouts have to say," Coleman said. "If I can have a good year and they come back with a super offer, then I will have to listen to it. I could play both sports in college, but I still don't think that will



Shaun Coleman is an outstanding run/pass quarterback at the prep level, but will likely be moved to outside linebacker or strong safety at Nebraska.

be in my best interest. I have been told by the Nebraska coaching staff that I can play both if I want, but for the moment I think I am just going to be play football, at least until I get my feet on the ground. Maybe, my sophomore or junior season I could play both."

Early in recruiting, Coleman was drawing the most interest from Air Force because of his option skills. However, once the Cornhuskers entered the picture and got serious with an offer, Coleman didn't feel he had any choice.

"Nebraska has a great program, one of the very best in the country," said Coleman. "I looked for negatives in the program and just couldn't find any. I could tell that the coaches were top notch and treated me with class. I felt they were genuine in what they told me. I just felt that I was going to be treated right at Nebraska."

Trevor Johnson (6-4, 220, 4.7) of Lincoln (Northeast), Neb., also told Nebraska that he will sign in 1999. Johnson is considered the top tight end prospect in the state and picked the Cornhuskers over Wyoming and New Mexico State.

"Growing up in Nebraska, I have always dreamed about playing there," said Johnson. "I think they have the top program in the country, and they will throw to their tight ends. It's the perfect place for me. My parents and friends can watch me play. It's a great program, and the Nebraska offense is one of the very best in the country."

Johnson has eight catches for 106 yards and two touchdowns after two games. He's also an outstanding line-backer prospect, coming up with 10 tackles, returning a fumble 64 yards for a score and returning an interception 14 yards. Trevor has Cornhusker ties as his father Bob was a three-time captain of the Husker wrestling team at heavyweight.

Nebraska always seems to draw interest from the top offensive linemen in the country. The Cornhuskers always recruit every offensive lineman they can find in-state then they branch out offering the very best across the country.

The Cornhuskers already have a verbal commitment from **Chris Loos** (6-4, 300, 5.20) of Lincoln (Southeast), Neb., and are waiting word on **Terrell Gardner** (6-6, 325, 5.1) of Omaha (Central), Neb., and **Tim Green** (6-5, 300,

REP REPORT

Keeping Up With COLBY FREEMAN

WE HAD AN OPEN DATE this past weekend, which I realize is kind of unusual in high school football. I used the open date to rest. I guess when you start two-a-days and you really get into your scrimmages, it's pretty much a straight shot until the end of the season, so this last weekend was pretty refreshing for me.

I ended up not doing anything Friday. I thought about going to a game but decided to stay at home and relax and get ready for this next week. I didn't go to any college games, either. I just stayed at home and relaxed and enjoyed my family.

I watched Texas A&M and Texas play on television. I went back and forth on that game. I watched Tennessee and Florida that night. I thought A&M played a great game. The offense executed well and Dante Hall came in there hurt and still ran right by some guys. I was impressed. It looks like A&M really has their program going right now. Their defense is pretty stout.

I thought the Tennessee game was a great game. I was excited for Tee Martin, the Tennessee quarterback, just because of all the pressure that he's been under taking over for Peyton Manning. I thought it was a neat deal that he won a big game for them.

Everybody in our district played except us. We had some coaches go to the Granbury game. I read in the paper Saturday about the Everman-Basil game, and we had a coach at the Stephenville game. So, we are keeping an eye on our opponents.

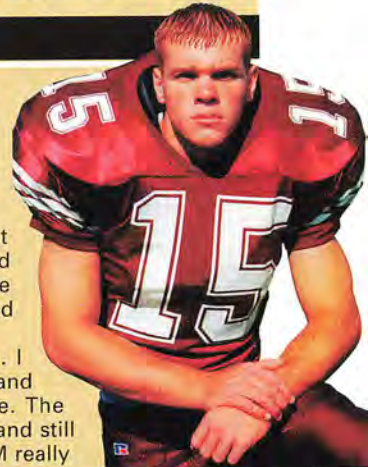
District play is where you really have to play great football. Most of the players are a lot more focused, because these games mean a lot more than just regular games. District games determine whether you go to the playoffs or not. I think we have started off well, and we had a good week getting ready for district play, so I think we are going to be ready.

We play Granbury this week. They are one of those teams that if you let them stay in the game with you, they will stay in the game and are liable to beat you. They play four quarters, they are well coached and are a well disciplined team. They know their assignments and will stick to those. We will have to stick a throwing game in there and try to open up some running and passing lanes.

I haven't talked to any coaches this week. I am in a process right now of trying to decide if I want to commit early or not. I thought I was totally decided that I was going to wait until after the season. However, I don't think I have really decided what I am going to do yet. The more and more I look into it, I think if I can make up my mind, then that would make it better for the team that I choose and anybody else that might be looking at me. I would like to, if I definitely know, to go ahead and commit.

However, I am not sure where I want to go. I am still looking at Texas A&M, Texas and Nebraska. I am still undecided among the three, but I am confident that everything is going to come clear to me soon. As soon as I know I will go ahead and commit and get this over with. ■ — **As told to James Hale**

Throughout the 1998 football season, Huskers Illustrated will chronicle the recruiting process of Brownwood quarterback Colby Freeman, one of the top prospects in Texas.



Colby FREEMAN

5.25) of Omaha (Westside), Neb. Gardner is a raw talent who is still waiting to hear the word from Nebraska while Green is just waiting

for a positive test score to come in. Tim's brother Mike is already on scholarship at Nebraska, and there is a good chance that Tim will follow.

Gardner is also looking at New Mexico State and Michigan, but it's a good bet that he and Green will eventually sign with Nebraska.

Vernon Carey (6-5, 315, 5.25) of Miami (Northwestern) is ranked by many as the top offensive line prospect in the country. Carey has already received over 60 scholarship offers. Thus far, Northwestern is 3-0 on the season, and Carey has led an offen-

Early Birds

These players have given Nebraska verbal non-binding commitments.

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	High School
Josh Davis	TB	6-0	194	4.4	Loveland, Colo.
Ryon Bingham	DT	6-4	260	5.0	Sandy (Alta), Utah
Rob Blomeier	QB/DB	6-0	194	4.5	Lancaster (Manheim Township), Pa.
Judd Davies	FB	6-1	238	4.7	Omaha (Millard North), Neb.
Taylor Gehman	FS	6-0	190	4.5	Omaha (Northwest), Neb.
Chris Loos	OL	6-3	275	5.4	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.
Phil Peetz	DT	6-2	250	4.9	Elkhorn, Neb.
Trevor Johnson	TE	6-4	220	4.7	Lincoln (Northeast), Neb.
Shaun Coleman	LB/QB	6-4	212	4.5	Aurora (Regis Jesuit), Colo.

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sive line charge that has cleared the way for his running back to rush for 200 yards per game.

Carey is grading out at 90 percent per game, and Northwestern is ranked as the No. 1 team in Florida's class 6A. Early on, Carey is leaning toward staying home and playing at Miami, but he's also evaluating Ohio State, Florida, Kentucky, Florida State and Nebraska.

"It's a great honor to be drawing so much attention, and it's something that I live up to each game that I play," Carey said. "Nebraska has a great program. Every position at Nebraska is manned by a great athlete and a great player. Their offensive line has a great reputation, and not many schools really promote their offensive lineman like Nebraska."

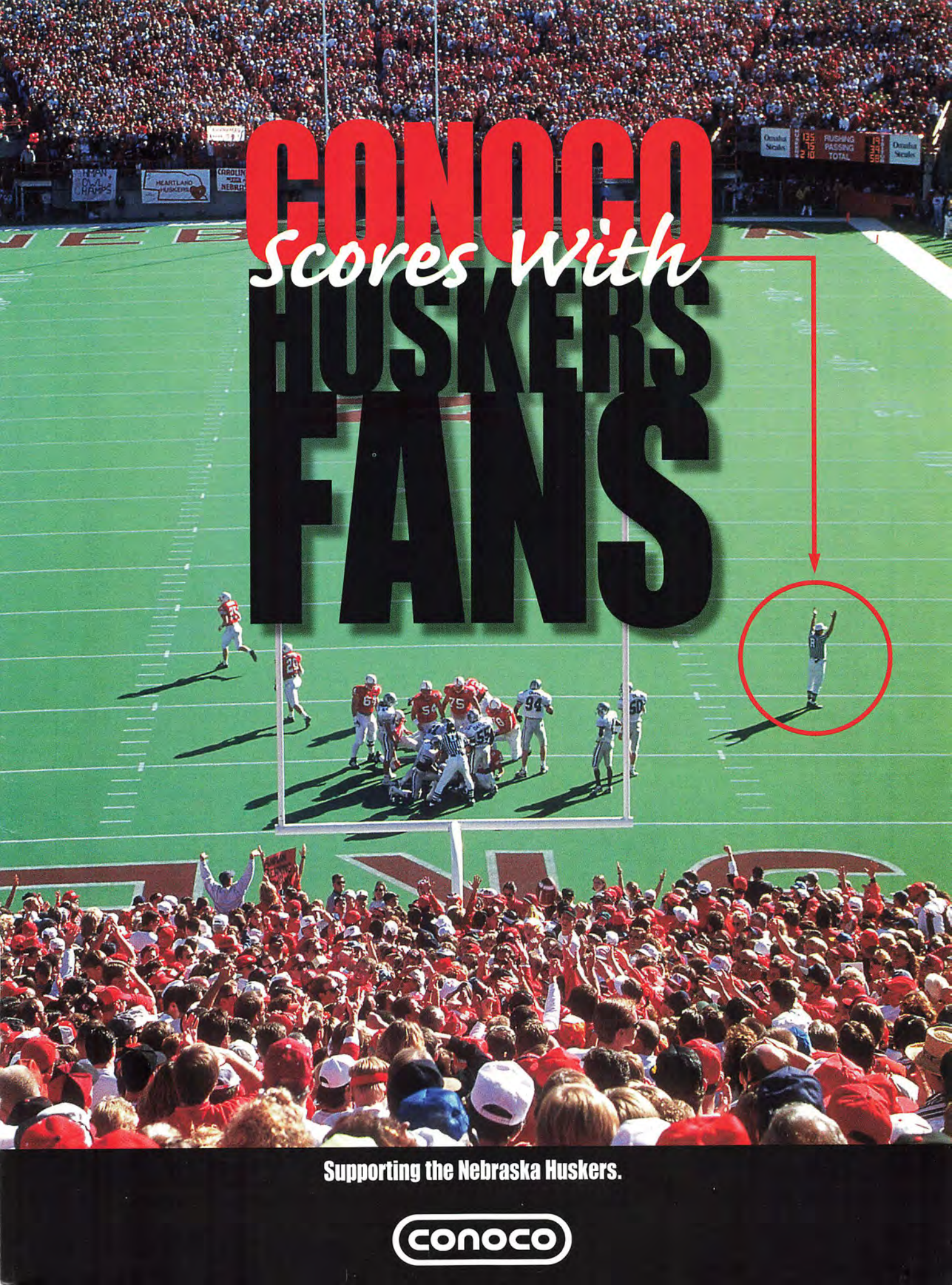
Kevin Breedlove (6-5, 295, 5.1) of Clemson (Daniel), S.C., moved from Texas three years ago and has become a dominant offensive lineman. He can bench 355 pounds, is the Class 3A shot put champion and was the runner-up at heavyweight in wrestling. Breedlove is favoring Georgia, but Nebraska has always been a program that he's admired.

"I have liked Nebraska ever since I was a little kid," said Breedlove. "They are known for producing the best offensive lineman in the country and I would love to play in a program like that."

Georgia leads Nebraska, Notre Dame, Clemson, Michigan, Tennessee and Stanford.

Watshidimba Kabongo (6-7, 280, 5.2) of Montreal (Vanier) worked out this summer at the Nebraska camp. Very quick on his feet, the Canadian Kabongo also plays defensive end and really enjoys playing on that side of the ball. However, his future is on the offensive line and Nebraska, Syracuse and Michigan are his top three choices.

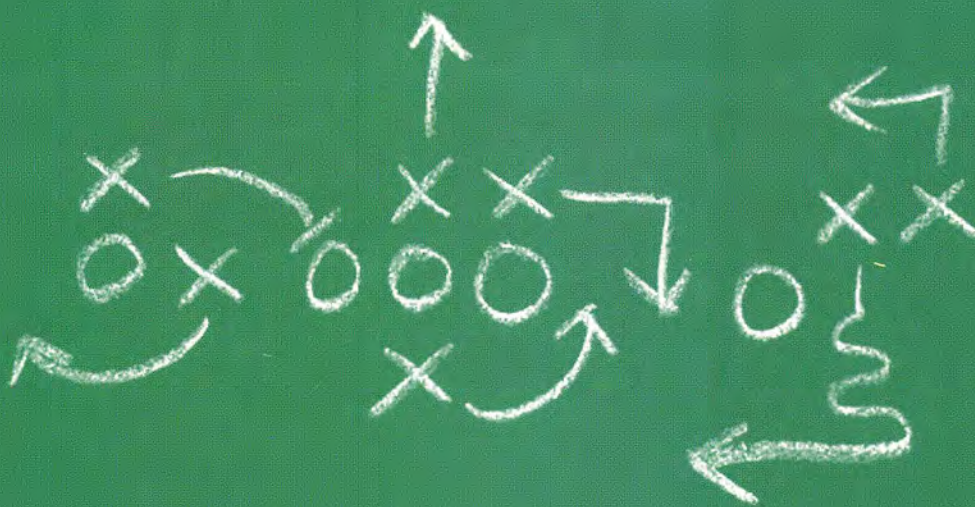
Neal Ambron (6-7, 276, 4.8) of Littleton and **Ryan Haywood** (6-5, 280, 4.8) of Denver (Jefferson) are two of the very best out of Colorado who are looking seriously at Nebraska. Ambron is dominant up front with a 335 bench and 580 squat. He's leaning toward Colorado with Michigan, Nebraska, Washington and UCLA in the picture. Haywood camped at Nebraska, Colorado State and Colorado and likes those three programs early. OU, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida State, North Carolina and Oklahoma State are also in the hunt.



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In Texas, **Derrick Dockery** (6-6, 310, 5.3) of Garland (Lakeview) was a preseason All-American and is playing even better this season. Already credited with 19 pancake blocks, Dockery is the main force up front for 3-0 Lakeview, grading out at 92 percent in every game. Texas is the early leader, with Florida State, Michigan, Notre Dame, Kentucky, Colorado, Nebraska, Texas A&M and OU in the picture.

Tre Mathis (6-3, 340, 5.5) of Garland, Texas, has six pancakes through three games and has graded out at 90 percent. He's wide open concerning recruiting but admits Nebraska is his top choice ahead of Syracuse, Tennessee, Colorado, Texas A&M and OU.

Greg Barnum (6-3, 280, 4.9) of Killeen (Ellison) is the best center in Texas and has great feet, speed and quickness. Barnum is still considering a number of schools including Nebraska, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, LSU, Notre Dame, Miami, OU, Oklahoma State, Iowa, Texas and Texas A&M.

Alan Rueber (6-7, 265, 5.1) of Plano, Texas, has already set visits with Miami and Notre Dame. Ohio State, Texas, Texas A&M, Tennessee, Florida and Nebraska are fighting to get the other three.

Sedrick Lewis (6-5, 325, 4.9) of East Orange, N.J., and **Nick Johnson** (6-8, 310, 5.3) of Cottonwood (Mingus), Ariz., are two more outstanding prospects who are interested in the Cornhuskers. Johnson currently favors Ohio State but has Nebraska, UCLA, Michigan and Arizona State in the mix. Lewis has already been offered by Nebraska but is also considering Ohio State and North Carolina. ■



With his brother, Mike, a current offensive lineman at Nebraska, Tim Green (above) could also choose Lincoln as his college destination.

CAMPUS LIFE

As Seen Through The Eyes Of Matt Davison

HIS LEGS ARE SPINDLY, at least compared to his teammates. His upper body wouldn't intimidate your average 10th-grade football star.

On the field, Nebraska split end Matt Davison is a Volkswagen amongst sports-utility vehicles. You almost fear some fire-breathing linebacker might break him in half.

"Matt is rather on the lean side, to say the least," Nebraska receivers coach Ron Brown said. "To be honest, I was looking for him to gain a little mass this year. But I haven't seen it. Maybe he needs that extra dose of creatine. Maybe I need to start injecting him when he's not looking."

Davison, however, possesses qualities no muscle-building supplement can produce. The 6-foot, 180-pound sophomore from Tecumseh, Neb., played much of last season with a strained quadriceps but still caught 11 passes for 232 yards.

Davison is part of an interesting group of receivers.

"They're all radical individuals, strange guys, every one of them," said Brown, only half-jokingly.

"You have Lance Brown, Mr. Flamboyance; Sheldon Jackson, Mr. Abstract; Shevin Wiggins, very quiet, kind of aloof; Kenny Cheatham, very moody; and Matt Davison, who's just kind of chilling out."

Brown compares Davison to former Nebraska receivers Morgan Gregory and Jon Bostick. Gregory and Bostick, Brown said, were smooth and unflappable. They made their jobs look easy. They picked up new wrinkles in the offense easily.

Because of their natural ability and feel for the game, Brown said, they had a tendency "to float" through practices. So does Davison.

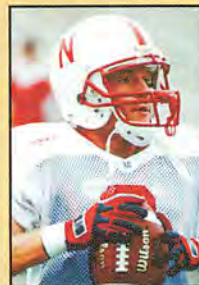
"Pressure is no big deal to him," Brown said. "On Saturdays, even though I think he gets jacked up for the game, he stays pretty calm. So, you can imagine, practice can be flat boring for a kid like that. So you have to be like a dog, nipping at his heels, just to make sure he keeps up the pace."

Entering this season, Brown said, he wondered how Davison would react after the sudden stardom thrust upon him last season. After all, his diving TD grab of a ball that had been inadvertently kicked by Wiggins against Missouri was arguably "The Play" of the 1997 college season. Davison, though, plays down the catch.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," he said.

Brown said he wouldn't be surprised if Davison produces a few more memorable moments before he completes his eligibility.

"Matt has that intangible gift of feel for the ball, of knowing here things are going to take place," Brown said. "He gets a jump on people because of his knowledge and savvy. Plus, he has this undeniable spirit to him. There's just something about him..." ■ — *As told to Steve Sipple*



Matt DAVISON

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Complacency Not In Cornhuskers' Vocabulary

After a surprisingly easy victory over Washington the week before, the Cornhuskers insist they were not overconfident against Oklahoma State



Mike BABCOCK

COMPLACENCY? "I DON'T THINK our players were complacent," Nebraska coach Frank Solich said.

"I thought they played very, very hard. If we were complacent, we probably would not have played with the same amount of intensity."

The No. 2-ranked Cornhuskers needed every ounce of intensity they could muster to defeat Oklahoma State, 24-17, before a sellout crowd of 79,555 at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City.

The potential for complacency was a result of Nebraska's 55-7 victory against Washington the week before.

"I'm interested to see how we're going to react after that game," sophomore I-back DeAngelo Evans said last week. "Hopefully, complacency won't set in. After a win like we had on Saturday, if you don't keep working hard, you make yourself vulnerable to be beaten."

Although the Cornhuskers worked hard in practice the week before the Oklahoma State game, Solich was concerned they had lost their edge.

"We don't try to get overly excited about preparing for any one team," he said. "And we try not to get overly excited about winning a particular game. When you add it up, it's still just one win."

There was no reason to think the Cowboys didn't get Nebraska's full attention and best effort.

But the statistics were very atypical of the Cornhuskers, who appeared to have gotten their running attack back on track against Washington after a lackluster beginning.

Nebraska went into the Oklahoma State game ranked second in the nation in rushing on the strength of a 434-yard effort against Washington, which boosted its per-game average to 303.3.

But Oklahoma State contained the Cornhuskers' option, limiting it to 73 yards rushing on 36 carries.

Evans managed only 41 yards to lead Nebraska and quarterback Bobby Newcombe rushed for just 22 yards on 13 carries.

"We'll need to take a close look at the tape," Solich said of the lack of success rushing. "Really, we got no big plays out of our running attack, which is somewhat bothersome."

Nevertheless, the game was a learning experience.

"When it doesn't seem like much is working, I think they grow from that," said Solich.

Oklahoma State was something of an enigma. The Cowboys went into the game with a 2-1 record, their loss coming against Tulsa, 35-20, one week before they upset Mississippi State, ranked No. 25 at the time, 42-23.

They had an off-week to prepare for Nebraska, which had solidified its No. 2 position in both major polls with the decisive Washington victory.

In typical fashion, Solich prepared for the Oklahoma State team that defeated Mississippi State.

"This may be the best overall team we've faced," he said going into the game.

A key reason for such an assessment was sophomore quarterback Tony Lindsay, who made some big second-half plays by throwing the ball.

Lindsay is the type of multi-dimensional quarterback the Cornhusker defense will see more often now that Big 12 play has begun, according to defensive coordinator Charlie McBride.

"We're going to see more balanced (offensive) football as we get into the conference," he said. "All the teams we're playing against have not directed their attack to one specific area. They've been trying to approach both a running and passing game. And when those things happen,

you start getting more into the play-action stuff, which puts a burden on your coverage system."

Oklahoma State ran right at the Cornhuskers much of the game, with Nathan Simmons and Jamaal Fobbs rushing for a combined 169 yards on 38 carries.

But Simmons was stopped short of the end zone on the game's final play from inside the Nebraska 1-yard line.

"You have to credit Nebraska," Simmons said. "They fired off the ball and had great penetration. It could have gone either way. It just did not go our way."

The Cornhusker defense certainly wasn't complacent on the final play.

And that's what mattered.

Said Solich before the game: "There's still a lot to be proved by just about everybody in the country. It's still somewhat early in the season. You just have to go about it week by week. You just have to do the best you can at proving you're deserving of where people think you should be rated."

And that means there can be no room for complacency. ■

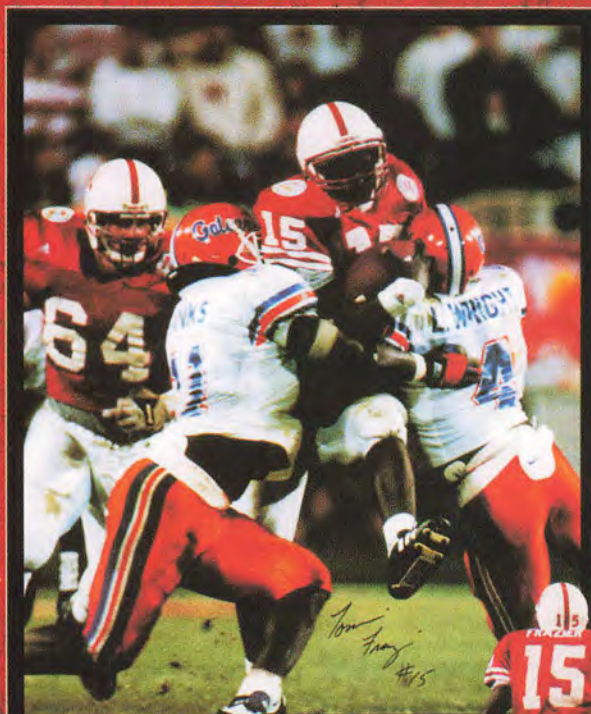


The Blackshirts stuffed Tony Lindsay on this play, but the Oklahoma State quarterback hurt Nebraska with some big plays in the second half.

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